

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

No. 403.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 21, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

MAZEPPA No. 2, THE BOY FIRE COMPANY OF CARLTON; OR, PLUCKY WORK ON LADDER AND LINE.

By EX-FIRE CHIEF WARDEN.



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BY EX-FIRE CHIEF WARDEN

CHAPTER I.

"OH, THE TOWER FALLS!"

On a dark night some years ago three young men were on the main street of Carlton in front of the Carlton House, the leading hotel of the place. They seemed to be quite excited over something that had happened inside the hotel. One was particularly angry.

"Why did you interfere?" he said to his two companions. "I would have given him the thrashing he deserved, the young whelp!"

"Keep cool, Al. Had we permitted you to attack him in there her name would have been mixed up in it, and that would not do, you know."

"No, of course not," assented the third young man.

"That would do her no harm," angrily replied the first young man. "Here he comes now! Hands off and I'll give him what he deserves," and he fairly hissed the words as he gazed at a medium-sized youth of eighteen coming out of the hotel.

The youth was of shapely build, with a frank, manly air about him and laughing blue eyes.

He was plainly dressed, but carried himself like one who feared nothing in all the wide world.

As he descended to the sidewalk he went in the direction of the three young men some fifty feet away from the hotel entrance. The angry young man sprang forward as he approached, exclaiming in low, hissing tones:

"This is for you, Tom Hazen!" and with the last word dealt him a blow squarely between the eyes.

The youth staggered backward under the force of the blow. But he recovered in an instant and sprang forward with the agility of a tiger.

Clang!

Clang!

Clang!

A great bell in the heart of the city is struck three times.

At the first stroke the youth came to a full stop, as if suddenly rooted to the spot, and seemed to be listening. At the second he bounded forward, dealt his foe a terrific blow on the right cheek, and then darted off across the street and disappeared in the shadow of the houses over there.

The blow downed the young man. But he sprang to his feet only to be caught and held by his two companions.

"Release me!" he hoarsely cried, struggling to get away from them. "Let me go after him! I'll have it out with the young whelp or die!"

"Keep quiet, Al," urged one of his two friends. "He has gone to his fire company. What show would you have there? They would tear you limb from limb!"

The exchange of blows was made so quickly that none but the four interested ones knew of it.

But the clanging of the great fire bell caused everybody in the hotel to rush out and eagerly gaze about for the whereabouts of the fire. The three strokes told in which ward the fire was, and those who understood the signals looked in the direction of the south side of the city.

Just as they caught a glimpse of a bright glare in that direction a roar was heard up the street.

"Look out! Keep clear of the street!" cried a voice on the sidewalk. "The engine is coming!"

The roaring was like that of a storm at sea, growing louder every moment.

People who had run out into the street to get a better view of the reddening glow dashed back to the sidewalk for safety.

"Look out! Here comes Mazeppa No. 2!"

"Clang! Clang! Clang!"

The fire-engine bell struck to warn people out of the way.

"Clear the way!" came through a trumpet, and the words were heard clear and distinct above the roar of the rushing steeds. Almost at the same moment a magnificent fire-engine, its nickel and brass finishings burnished till they shone like stars, dashed by, drawn by two superb iron grays. Between the horses, near their shoulders, trumpet in hand

and helmet on his head, stood the youth who was struck as he came out of the hotel but a few moments before.

He was standing on the pole of the engine, his left hand resting on the neck of the horse on that side. His right hand held a silver trumpet to his lips.

"Clear the way!" came through the trumpet again, and in another moment the roaring, rushing panorama was way down in the next block.

"I never saw anything like that before!" exclaimed a guest of the hotel. "I shall never forget it as long as I live. Who is that youth standing erect between those horses?"

"That was Tom Hazen, foreman of the Boys' Fire Company," replied a policeman near by.

"What was he standing on?"

"Nothing but the pole."

"Here comes Mazeppa's ladders!" cried a voice in the crowd, and in another moment a hook and ladder team dashed by in the wake of the fire-engine.

By this time the red glare in the southern end of the city grew brighter, and the crowd on the street surged along in that direction. It was in the aristocratic part of the town, and people knew that it was a private residence that was burning.

"It's Leonard Morton's house!" called out some one in the crowd.

"Why! That's the finest house in the town!" exclaimed another, and the crowd that still remained in and about the hotel made a rush down the street.

"What's that?" cried a young man, going along in the opposite direction. "Whose house did they say was burning?"

"They say it's your father's, Al," replied his companion, looking around at the red glare against the horizon, "but I don't think it can be, as it seems a little too far to the left."

"Oh, my God!" and the young man turned and gazed in the direction of the fire like one half dazed. He was the same young man who had been knocked down by Tom Hazen, the young fireman, only a few minutes before, and his name was Al Morton, son of the rich banker and manufacturer.

"No, I don't think it is, either," added the third young man.

"Let's get a carriage and go down," said young Morton. "Call one, Dick, that's a good fellow. I'm all broke to pieces."

Dick Algood ran across the street to where several hacks stood and sprang into one.

The driver hurried over to the other two young men, and they sprang inside quickly.

"Drive to the fire, quick!" cried one of the party, and the carriage went down the street at a furious pace.

Mazeppa No. 2, the boy fire company, was the first on the ground, even getting a stream playing on the flames ere any other engine arrived.

It was a grand mansion, four stories high, standing in a grove of elms. By some strange accident the entire lower floor was filled with a seething mass of flame. Nearly the entire household had been caught in the upper stories, and they were screaming for help from the windows when the firemen arrived.

Dense volumes of black smoke, with now and then a tongue of red flame darting out like that of a venomous serpent.

Tom Hazen, the young fireman of Mazeppa No. 2, sprang to the ground, gazed up at the windows and sung out through his trumpet:

"Boys, here are lives to be saved! Let every one do his duty! Up with the ladder! Pour a stream through that door

there!" and he pointed to the front door of the mansion which had been burst open by some one.

Ere the last word had passed his lips a stream of water was poured through the open door. It was heard to strike the stairs and fall in a shower on the floor.

"Save me! Oh, oh, oh! I'm burning up!" came in shrieks from a third story window.

The ladder had just touched the window of the next room.

Dropping his trumpet and letting it swing by the cord over his shoulder, Tom Hazen sprang to the ladder and ran up to the third story window with the agility of a squirrel going up a tree.

On reaching the window he climbed in, though a dense volume of black smoke puffed out into his face.

Then Jack Thorn, assistant foreman, sprang forward and ran up the ladder after him.

Jack was the same size and age as Tom and his bosom friend.

He, too, disappeared through the window.

"Those boys will be lost!" cried a voice in the crowd.

"Clear the way there!" cried a policeman. "Here comes another engine! Back there, I say! Clear the way!" and aided by half a dozen others he pushed back the crowd and made room for the second engine.

Just a few seconds later the third engine dashed up, the Vigilant, the oldest fire company in Carlton, whose members were all veteran firemen.

Then came the chief of the fire department, a tall man with eagle eyes and a huge tawny, mustache.

He saw at a glance that the house was doomed and sang out to the firemen:

"Boys, the house is doomed! Save all the lives you can!"

"Hi! Hi! Look there!" cried the boy firemen, as a figure appeared at a window with a girl in his arms.

"It's Jack!" cried one.

"No, it's Tom!" cried another.

"Move the ladder! Move the ladder!"

A half dozen darted forward and moved the ladder to the window where he stood.

Quick as a flash a big strong fellow from Vigilant Fire Company rushed forward and ran up Mazeppa's ladder.

"Gimme your load, my lad!" he said to the boy fireman in the window, and in another moment he had the form of an unconscious young girl in his arms.

"Come out, my lad!" he called to Tom.

Tom instantly disappeared, and the fireman went down the ladder with his burden. A rush was made to see if she was hurt.

"Back! Back!" cried the police. "Stand back out of the way!"

Young Al Morton ran forward and cried out to one of the officers:

"This is my home! I have a right to be here! That is my youngest sister!" and he rushed up to the brawny fireman who still bore her in his arms, exclaiming:

"Give her to me! She is my sister!"

"She has only fainted, young man," said the fireman, as he gave her to him.

"There's Jack! There's Jack!" cried the young Mazeppas. "Play on him, Bill! He is all ablaze!"

Bill Saxton, the boy at the nozzle, turned the stream on Jack Thorn, who appeared at the window to the left of the ladder.

He seemed all ablaze, and held something in his arms.

"Run up and help him, Dan!" called out the boy at the nozzle, and Dan Allen, another of Mazeppa's boys, sprang to the ladder.

"Move the ladder—move the ladder!" yelled a score at

once, and the long ladder was turned over several times against the house till it reached the window.

"Now, Dan, up with you!"

Dan fairly flew over the rungs.

When he got there poor Jack had sunk to the floor, overcome by heat and smoke.

"Dan—Dan!" called those below. "Look out!"

"Send another up!" Dan sung out, and then leaped into the window, disappearing from view of those below.

A groan escaped many of the boys, for they loved brave Dan as a brother.

"There he is—there he is!" yelled half a hundred, as Dan reappeared at the window with Jack in his arms.

"Blanket, boys!" Dan cried.

Four of the young firemen sprang forward and held the four corners of a strong piece of canvas called a "blanket" directly under the window. The next moment the unconscious form of Jack Thorn came whizzing through the air and landed on it.

The rebound sent him up some two feet again, when he fell back like one dead.

"Is he dead?"

"Is he alive?"

"Is he much burned?"

How thick and fast came the questions as they bore him away from the burning building.

Again the police had to club the excited crowd back.

"Look at Dan! He has another!"

Brave Dan reappeared with the woman Jack had fallen to the floor with. He held her with his left, and used his right arm to balance himself with, as he climbed out on the ladder.

"Be ready with the blanket again, boys!" cries the chief of the fire department. "Dan is a hero! Save him from a fall!"

But Dan ran down the ladder with his burden, a little lady of slender build, who was entirely unconscious.

A wild cheer went from the vast throng when they saw him safely land. The fire chief sprang forward, caught his hand and exclaimed:

"You are a hero, Dan Allen!"

Dan was so blinded by fire and smoke he could not even see who it was who had spoken to him. When they saw him feeling his way about they led him away.

"Oh, my God, boys!" cried Bill Saxton, the nozzle holder, "Tom is there yet!"

"Yes, yes! Save Tom, boys!" and a half dozen rushed to the ladder at once.

"Come back! Come back!" yelled the fire chief in stentorian tones.

"We must save Tom Hazen!" they cried, and up they went.

But they were met by great tongues of red flame, threatening instant death, and they had to back down.

No human being could have faced those fiery blasts and live, hence all on the ground believed the brave young fireman had met his death at last.

"Tom is lost!" cried one of the boy firemen, and groans and sobs were heard from many of them.

"No! There he is! Up on the tower! Hooray—hooray!"

There he was on the roof of the tower, which rose above the building on the left corner, with a young girl standing by his side.

Placing the trumpet to his lips, he called out to the firemen below:

"Give us a ladder from the tree!"

The tree was a great elm, some ten feet from the corner of the house. Some of its branches actually touched it. The leaves were withering under the scorching heat.

The brave boys hurried with all their speed to place a

ladder against the tree. That done two men ran up into the tree to pull up another ladder to run it out to the tower.

The walls were almost ready to fall. The flames were eating away the tower where it touched the main building. Tom stood on the roof with his left arm supporting the young lady by his side. The tower was actually reeling.

"Hurry up, boys!" he called through the trumpet in his right hand.

Then he was seen speaking to the young girl.

"They can't save us," she said to him. "We are doomed. You will lose your life in trying to save mine. God will reward you for your noble sacrifice."

"Don't despair; see, they are hurrying up with the ladder."

"But the tower is sinking! Hold me close! Oh, God, this is awful!"

"Here, I'll jump for the limbs!" cried Tom. "Let me make you fast to me first!" and he took the strong silk cord that he used to hang his trumpet over his shoulder and passed it around her slender waist. Then he tied it hard and fast to his leather belt.

"Oh, the tower falls!" she cried, and a long wail of despair escaped her lips as she flung her arms about his neck. At the same moment the tower made a sudden drop of about a foot and then fell toward the tree, crashing against the branches, while groans of horror went up from the multitude below.

CHAPTER II.

A CLOSE CALL—TOM HAZEN.

A dense volume of smoke and cinders enveloped the brave fireman and the young girl as the tower fell to the ground with a terrific crash.

The firemen made a rush to rescue them, but they were not found there.

They looked in vain until a great cheer went up from the multitude.

"There they are in the tree, in the tree, in the tree!"

There they were, sure enough.

Tom was hanging to a limb with both hands and the young girl was clinging to his neck. She had not fainted.

"The ladder, the ladder!" cried the fire chief. "Stand a ladder under him."

Brave firemen from all three engines rushed forward to hold a ladder against Tom Hazen as he hung there in the tree.

They held it against him so he could put his feet on the rung and then let go the limb.

The moment he let go and caught hold of the ladder a great wild cheer burst from the multitude. Men burst into tears of joy, so great had been the tension of suspense.

Woman-like, as soon as her feet touched the ground, the young lady swooned and seemed like one dead. Some one cut the cord that bound her to Tom, and Al Morton burst into the crowd, seized her in his arms, kissed her pallid face and cried out wildly:

"Clear the way! Clear the way there!" and started off through the crowd with her.

Of course the crowd gave way, and she was borne to a place of safety.

No sooner had she been taken from Tom than the chief of the fire department rushed up to him and grasped his hand.

What he said to him no one heard, for a wild shout went up all around him. The boys of Mazeppa No. 2 sprang forward, lifted him on their shoulders, and bore him back away from the terrible heat of the conflagration.

"Hooray! Hooray!" they yelled, and the great crowd re-echoed their cheers.

Bill Saxton, though, never relaxed a single moment with his steady stream of water, nor did either of the other two engines.

But the house was doomed.

The flames made such quick headway that nothing on earth could have saved it.

"Let me down, boys," Tom cried. "This is no time for play."

"They're all out! They're all saved!" cried the boys, as they bore him around on their shoulders.

"Let me down!" he called again, and they finally let him down on his feet.

"Where's Jack?" he asked.

"He is hurt," replied some one.

"Badly? Is he alive?"

"Yes; he has been taken away."

"Anybody killed?" and he turned to the fire chief.

"I think not. But I never saw more narrow escapes in all my life."

"I never had such a close call in my life," Tom said.

"Who was that young lady? She is the bravest girl that ever lived. Why, she wasn't half as much frightened as I was."

No one in the crowd around him could tell him who she was.

"Where did you find her?" some one asked him.

"In one of the rooms on the third floor. She seemed to be dazed by the heat and smoke, and didn't know which way to turn."

"Come, let's get out of this!" I called to her, and she came up to me with both hands outstretched, saying:

"Take me out, please," and I caught her hand and ran up into the next room, through which I had just come. To my horror I found that the ladder had been moved. I caught her round the waist and ran her into a corridor, and up a flight of stairs. Every place was filled with smoke. I struck another flight, and found it leading to the little tower. There I got a breath of air, with no smoke in it, and it revived both of us. But I saw that our chance of escape was slim, and told her so. Would you believe it, she told me to save myself and leave her to her fate? I said if she couldn't go with me I'd go with her. She's the bravest girl I ever saw."

"Stand clear; the walls may fall!" came from Bill Saxton, running back toward the engine with his nozzle.

The crowd moved back, but the wall didn't fall.

"Tom Hazen, are you hurt?" the fire chief asked him.

"I really don't know, chief," he replied. "I believe I have a few burns."

"Do you know who it is you have saved?"

"No."

"She is Miss Pelham, the daughter of the governor."

"Indeed! Well, I would have risked as much for the poorest girl in Carlton."

"Of course you would. We all know that. Come back farther away from the fire."

They moved farther back and then Tom said:

"I am worried about Jack. Who knows how badly he was hurt?"

"They took him to the hospital," some one said.

"I want to see him, chief; can I go?" and he turned to the chief.

"Yes, go ahead, Tom. I'll take your place," was the chief's reply.

Tom turned away, followed by a number of people. Some believed he bore a charmed life and were superstitious about him.

The hospital was half a mile away, but he soon covered the distance.

He was met at the door by the man on duty there, who asked him:

"What do you want, sir?"

"I want to see Jack Thorn, one of my company, who was hurt at the fire to-night," Tom said.

"You can't see him to-night."

"Why not?"

"Against the rules."

"Can I see one of the doctors?"

"Yes, in the office," and the man pointed to the door which led into the office of the hospital.

He went in and there found a young physician and a clerk in charge.

"What do you want?" the clerk asked him.

"I want to see a doctor here."

"There's the doctor," and the clerk nodded toward the young man seated at a desk.

Tom went over to him and told him who he was and added:

"I would like to see Jack. He is one of our firemen."

"You can't see him to-night," was the curt reply.

"Not if he wishes to see me?"

"No."

Tom stood there a minute or two looking hard at the young man. He was too indignant to say anything for a few moments.

"What are you waiting for?" the young doctor finally asked, looking up at him.

"Nothing. I was simply admiring you," was the sarcastic reply. "Can you tell me where I can get one of your pictures?"

The young doctor flushed up quite red in the face and called to the clerk:

"Put this fellow out of here!"

The clerk came forward, put his hand rather roughly on Tom's shoulder and said:

"Come, get out now!"

Tom wheeled and pushed him over on the young doctor, upset him, and both rolled over on the floor. Then he turned and left the office and the hospital.

Out on the street Tom hastened back to the engine-house. He was too mad even to think.

"Oh, but I would like to get his head under my arm for just ten seconds," he said to himself, as he hastened on. "rules—rules—rules for everything! If we were tied up with rules, neither life nor property would be safe. Jack is as brave a boy as ever lived. Why they should not let his superior officer see him in his agony I can't understand. Lord, but I am in need of a little attention myself. I am scorched in a dozen places. I'll go into a drug store and get 'em to put some salve on my burns."

He went into the next one he saw, a large one on the main street of the city.

"Is there a doctor here who can do something for me?" he asked of the drug clerk. "I am burnt in several places."

"Yes—one in the back room; but why don't you go to the hospital?"

"Because I don't wish to do so," he replied, as he passed in to where the night physician had his desk behind a row of screens.

The doctor looked up, and Tom asked if he was the physician.

"Yes—what can I do for you?"

"I am a fireman, and have got some burns I would like to have dressed."

"Of course—let me see them," and the doctor arose and proceeded to examine his hurts.

When he had found out the extent of his hurts he asked:

"Is it true that the Morton residence is a total loss?"

"Yes; I think it is. It was all we could do to save lives, let alone any property."

Just then a party of young men came in and sat down on the other side of the screen to wait for the doctor.

"Yes, I saw it all," one of them said. "Al was full enough to toast Miss Pelham's beauty—his own cousin. Hazen had just come in looking for a friend whom he heard was in there. On hearing the toast he said no gentleman would use a lady's name in a bar-room. Al got furiously mad, and it was all we could do to prevent a fight then and there. But we finally got him out. Hazen came along a few minutes later and Al went for him, striking him square between the eyes. The fire bell struck the same moment. Hazen knocked him down and broke for the fire. He saved Miss Pelham's life. What a strange coincidence!"

"Yes, very strange, indeed," assented one of the others.

"They say he came from Hallsville two years ago to work in the iron foundry, and nobody knows anything about his people."

"Oh, he isn't but eighteen, you know."

"True, he is but a boy, but he has come to be the most daring fireman in the city, and all the boys who went into that fire company with him believe in him and back him against the world."

"Of course they do. Who would have believed he could have trained up boys to be such firemen as they are? Mazeppa No. 2 beat all the others to the fire to-night."

"Yes, and most of the others are old veterans, too. Al swore he'd run Hazen out of Carlton because of what took place at the hotel to-night; and since the young fireman has saved the life of Miss Pelham he'll hate him more than ever, I should think."

"Why, I should think it would cause him to love him."

"Not much. Al is in love with his beautiful cousin, and now she'll be saying complimentary things about the young fireman to everybody."

"Oh, I see. He'll be jealous," and the other laughed.

"That's it, and——"

Clang!

Clang!

Clang!

"Here, hold on there!" cried the doctor behind the screen. "Stop that fellow!"

At the first clang of the great fire bell Tom Hazen, who was lying on the table, having his hurts dressed by the doctor, sprang up, seized hat and trumpet and started on a run.

The doctor caught him by the arm and tried to hold him, mindful of his fee, but Tom hurled him off and dashed away like a deer.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed young Allgood, "that was Tom Hazen himself!"

CHAPTER III.

THE MANIAC FIRE FIEND.

When Tom Hazen left his company to go to the hospital he did so with the consent of the chief of the fire department.

Bill Saxton, at the nozzle, remained at his post, keeping up a stream on the ruins of the mansion. Tom Hazen, Jack Thorn and Dan Allen had gone. All the others remained.

The other two companies were there, too. They were all busy keeping streams going, when they were startled by the clang of the great fire bell again.

Clang!

Clang!

Clang!

Three times meant the third ward, and that was the one they were in at that moment.

"Where is it?" came from half the firemen on the ground.

Bill Saxton didn't wait to find out where it was, but began to reel up his hose.

Just as he had it on the reel the signal came again, and quick as a flash the Mazeppas were off, leaving the other companies but half ready to start.

The chief of the fire department went with them.

The fire was in a row of big tenement houses, where lived the families of the factory operatives.

The buildings were of frame and as combustible as tinder.

Just as Bill Saxton began to throw on a stream the clear, ringing voice of Tom Hazen was heard through his trumpet.

"Up with the ladder, boys! There are women and children in there!"

Up went the ladder, and up went Tom the moment it touched the burning building. Five women were in one room up on the second story floor in a state of abject terror.

"Come, ladies!" he called to them. "You must hurry down if you don't want to be roasted!" and he caught one of them by the arm and ran her to the window through which he had just come.

"Oh, save us! Save us!" cried the others, rushing about the room gasping and utterly blinded by the smoke.

"Of course I will if you will keep quiet and do as I tell you," and he then sung out through his trumpet:

"Some of you come up and lend a hand!"

By that time the other two companies had arrived on the ground, and two of the old veterans sprang nimbly up the ladder to his assistance.

"Oh, you are firemen!" cried one of the women. "Thank God you have come! Oh, that dreadful man!"

"Come, hurry down or the flames will get you!" said Tom, hurrying them out through the window to the ladder.

It took but a few moments to get them out and down the ladder. He went down with the last one himself.

Just as he reached the ground with her he was startled at hearing a wild, hoarse laugh, as though coming from a maniac, up in the burning building.

"Ha, ha, ha! Burn—burn! The world burns! The end of all things has come! Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's him—that's him!" cried the woman he had brought down the ladder. "He set the house on fire!"

Tom sprang up the ladder again and disappeared through the window.

Many others beside him heard that wild, maniacal laugh, and men looked inquiringly at each other. The chief of the fire department ran to one of the rescued women and asked:

"Who is that man laughing up there, madam?"

"Oh, I don't know. He is crazy, and set the house on fire. Oh, he was perfectly awful," and she gave a shudder expressive of the horror that filled her soul.

Tom ran from room to room in quest of the maniac, for such he now believed him to be. The rooms were filled with smoke. Some were enveloped in flames.

Suddenly he heard the wild laughter in an adjoining room, and made a rush in that direction. He found a man there holding an unconscious young girl under his arm.

"Ha, ha, ha! The man has come! The world burns, and all mankind perishes!"

Quick as a flash Tom tripped him, and he fell to the floor,

The daring young fireman then seized the girl in his arms and made a dash for the window through which he had come. The smoke and flames now became almost stifling. Just as he reached the window he heard that wild burst of laughter right behind him, and the next moment the maniac seized hold of him.

"Help here!" he called to the firemen below, and two firemen dashed up the ladder with wonderful speed.

"Take her down!" he cried, as he held her out to the one nearest to him.

The fireman received her and started down, saying:

"For God's sake come down, Tom!"

Tom did not hear him, for he was engaged in a death-struggle with the unknown maniac.

The man seemed to have the strength of a giant.

"Come, my man," Tom said to him. "Let's go down and see the world burn."

"Ha, ha, ha! The world burns! We'll burn with it! Everybody shall burn!" and he took the young fireman up in his arms and ran out into a corridor with him and up two flights of stairs.

"My God!" groaned Tom, as he saw how helpless he was in the grasp. "I am doomed! This fellow is too strong for me!"

The maniac ran up the scuttle ladder to the roof, which was a flat one, and, with a wild whoop held the young fireman at arm's length above his head as though he were but a mere child.

"Hold on!" Tom cried, seeing that he was in peril of his life. "Hold on and let me tell you——"

"Ha, ha, ha! The world burns! The whole world burns! The smoke and the flames are here! Burn! Burn!" and with that he rushed to the edge of the roof, and by a mighty force hurled the young fireman far out into space.

Tom groaned, for he knew that death awaited him on the pavements below.

Down—down he went whizzing through air and smoke and flame and——

Crash!

He struck a score or more of telegraph wires which ran along in front of the burning buildings. He rebounded and fell back on them again.

Not once had he lost his presence of mind. Quick as a flash he grasped the wires with both hands and threw himself across them.

A wild cheer went up from the firemen and the crowd below when they saw that he had found lodgment on the wires.

His trumpet was hanging to him by the silk cord which he always used in fastening it to himself. But now he seemed to have lost sight of it, as he was seen feeling for it as though he had lost his eyesight.

"The ladder, the ladder!" cried some of the firemen, and a rush was made for it to afford him a chance of escape by that means.

The wild maniac was seen in a frantic effort to fly. He waved his arms as though they were wings, with which he expected to soar aloft.

By this time huge tongues of red flame shot out of every window in the front side of the house. They seemed to be eager to touch the young fireman on the wires.

"Hold that ladder steady there!" cried the chief, and brave men did their best to do so, but leaning against swaying wires it seemed almost impossible for him to get on to the first rung without falling to the pavement below.

But he finally succeeded, and as he descended a cheer from firemen and spectators rose above the roar of the flames and the whirr of the engines.

"Tom! Tom! My brave boy!" cried the chief of the fire

department, as he grasped his hand, "God knows you have done enough to-night!"

"Yes—I—I——" and the brave young fireman reeled and fell like one dead at the feet of those about him.

"Stand back! Give him air!" cried the chief, sweeping back with his good right arm. "Take him away!"

CHAPTER IV.

TOM HAZEN'S ASTONISHMENT.

When Tom Hazen fell at the feet of the chief of the fire department many of the boy firemen believed he was dead. For the moment they forgot all discipline and crowded around their prostrate foreman.

"Is he dead—is he dead?" they called repeatedly.

"No, no! Back, boys—get back!" the chief cried. "Give him air! Let's take him away from here!" and the chief himself lent a hand in bearing him beyond the heat of the burning building.

They laid him on the grass, and then the chief called to an officer and said:

"Call an ambulance and see that he is taken to the hospital. I must go back to my post," and taking Tom's trumpet, he hurried back to look after the work of subduing the flames.

The officer promptly obeyed, and in a little while an ambulance came, and Tom was placed in it and driven away.

The brave firemen had a most terrific struggle to prevent the fire from spreading to the other houses in the block. It was long after midnight, and many were nearly exhausted, while many spectators had gone to their homes.

It was only by the most superhuman effort that the flames were kept from spreading. The maniac was seen to go down with the roof. Not even his charred bones were found, as the great heat entirely consumed them.

The ambulance in which Tom had been placed was driven furiously over the pavement in the direction of the hospital.

The severe jolting soon brought him to, and he rose up wondering where he was.

He looked up and saw the doctor and driver together on the front seat, and gradually he came to realize where he was. The hospital was the last place in the world he would care to go.

"Taking me to the hospital, eh?" he said to himself. "I must have lost my head after getting down off those wires. No wonder; it was enough, the Lord knows. But I'm not going to the hospital if I know myself," and he scrambled out of the rear end of the ambulance as it was passing through a dark part of the street.

He was bruised a little by the fall, but he got upon his feet and looked after the ambulance as it disappeared up the street.

"The doctor will be laughed at when he gets there," he said, as he turned away in another direction, "and I guess he'll say a few things he didn't learn at Sunday school. I'm going home and stay there till I feel all right again. Two fires in one night are too many for me.

"Lord, but that wild lunatic was strong! He handled me as though I were a mere child. I heard one of the women say he had set the house on fire. I wonder if that is true? Was he an anarchist, I wonder? Hello!" and he came to a full stop. "My trumpet is gone! I wonder where it is? Lord, I would not lose it for a thousand dollars. It must be in that ambulance, or the chief may have it. I guess some of the boys will take care of it for me."

He went on again and after quite a long walk he reached his boarding house, kept by the Widow Hulsey. Entering by means of a night key, he made his way up to his room and went to bed.

The boy firemen remained at their post till near daylight, by which time the flames were entirely subdued. Then they returned to their engine-house very much exhausted, having been up all night.

"Boys," said Bill Saxton, "we have had a hard time of it, but we have won all the honors!"

"That we have," sung out a dozen at once.

"But we don't know what it has cost us," Bill continued. "Tom and Jack and Dan are in the hospital, and we don't know how it may end with them."

"Oh, they are tough," said Ben Stewart. "I guess they are all right or soon will be."

"Toughness is a good thing against everything but fire," said Bill, shaking his head. "We are all very tired, but I suggest we send one of our number up to the hospital to find out how they are."

"Good! Good!" cried a dozen at once.

"Who will go?"

"I—I—I!" cried every one present.

"One is enough," Bill replied. "Ben, you had better go, and say to the doctor that we are all waiting to hear from Tom, Jack and Dan."

Ben was off like a flash, and the tired boy firemen threw themselves on benches and were soon sleeping the sleep of exhaustion.

It was near sunrise when young Stewart returned.

"Boys," he said, "they wouldn't let me see 'em, but sent word out that Thorn and Allen were sleeping and that Hazen had not been brought there at all."

"Why, I saw him go off in the ambulance!" cried Harry Hogan.

"He may have been sent to another hospital," said Saxton.

"Not much," returned Hogan. "I saw the name 'Carlton Hospital' on the ambulance."

"So did I," put in another one of the boys.

"Well, anyhow, they said he was not there and had not been there," Ben said.

"Where is he, then?" and Bill Saxton looked from one to the other of the boys.

"Yes, where is he?" a dozen asked.

"Let's all march up there and get an explanation," said Bill.

Every boy sprang up and in less than ten minutes they were on the way to the hospital.

The man at the door refused to let them enter.

Bill sprang in, and the others followed.

"We want to see the doctor in charge at once," Bill said.

"He is in there," the man replied, pointing to the office.

They marched in and found the same clerk and young doctor who were on hand when Tom called the night before, not having yet been relieved.

"Is Tom Hazen here?" Bill asked.

"No," was the curt reply.

"We saw him placed in your ambulance last night when he was unconscious, and heard the policeman tell the driver and doctor to take him to the hospital."

"There are the names of all the patients here," the doctor said, pointing to the register on the desk.

Bill looked over it and failed to find Tom Hazen's name there.

"Well, where did your ambulance take him, then?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"You can't give us any information about him?"

"No; I know nothing in the world about him."

"Where is the driver?"

"At the stable, I suppose."

"Where is that?"

"In the rear of the hospital on the next block."

"Come on, boys. We'll find out something about this or know the reason why," and Bill Saxton led the way out and round to the stable.

There they found the man in charge of the stable disposed to answer no questions, and wanted to refer them to the head doctor.

"You're the doctor we want," Bill said to him, "and you'll get an extra head on your shoulders if you don't talk to suit us. Where is the ambulance driver?"

"Here he is," said a burly fellow, coming out of a little office on the left. "What do you want of me?"

"Where did you leave the fireman you took away from the fire last night?" Bill asked.

"Well, hanged if I know. When we got here the ambulance was empty. He had given us the slip, I guess, and the doctor was mad."

"If he did he must have gone home, then. Come on, boys, we'll go to his boarding house and see if he is there," and they turned and made their way down to the street again.

They marched round to the Widow Hulse's boarding house where Tom had lived for two years.

Some of the boarders were just leaving after an early breakfast and were amazed at seeing all the members of Mazeppa No. 2 in front of the house.

"Is Tom here?" Bill asked of the girl who came to the door.

"I really don't know. He hasn't been down to breakfast yet," she replied, her blue eyes opening in surprise.

"May I go up to his room and see if he is there?"

"Why, yes," and she held the door open for him.

Saxton ran up the stairs, taking three or four steps at a bound, and knocked on Tom's door.

No reply came, and he pushed open the door and entered.

There lay Tom sound asleep—the sleep of utter exhaustion. He looked at him in silence for a minute or two and then came out on tiptoe to avoid waking him and went downstairs.

"He is asleep, boys," he said to the young firemen, "and I hadn't the heart to wake him up."

"Yes, and that's what we all need," Bill added. "Let's all go home and get as much sleep as we can and meet at the engine-house to-night."

They all turned away and quickly disappeared, and Saxton told the widow not to awake Tom, but let him sleep as long as he could.

The news of Tom's heroic deeds spread all over the city during the day, and his struggle with the maniac gathered interest as it was told and repeated. The entire city was thrilled by the story and no one repeated it more to his credit than did the chief of the fire department himself.

The members of the rival fire companies did not have much to say, but they were compelled to admit that Mazeppa No. 2 carried off all the honors.

"They happened to be the first at the fire," one said, "and that's how they came to get the chance to save life. Had we got there first our men would have done the saving. That's all the difference."

The chief went to see Tom, and found him still in bed.

"What's the matter, Hazen?" he asked.

"I am all broke up, chief," was the reply.

"No bones broken, I hope?"

"No, but I want to rest to-day."

"Well, you are entitled to a month if you need it."

"I guess I'll be all right to-morrow. Just tell 'em not to have any more fires till I get out again."

The chief laughed and said:

"I'll see to that. But if the bell rings, you stay where

you are. Here's your trumpet. I took it home with me this morning."

"Thank you, chief. I am glad to see it again. Tell the boys I am all right and will soon be out."

The chief then left him, and Tom fell asleep again and did not wake up until in the middle of the afternoon.

He was dressing hurriedly to go downstairs for something to eat when a knock on his door was heard.

"Come in," he said.

The door opened and two men, utter strangers to him, came in.

"Are you Tom Hazen?" one of them asked.

"Yes, that's my name," he replied, looking inquiringly at the man.

"We are detectives," said the man who first spoke.

"Detectives! What do you want here?" and Tom looked the astonishment he felt.

"Miss Pelham lost a valuable diamond ring last night, and we have been retained by Mr. Morton to look it up."

"Did he tell you to come here to look for it?" Tom asked.

"No. He simply reported the loss and we came to ask if you knew anything about it, thinking she might have placed it in your charge in her fright last night."

"I know nothing of it. She did not give it to me, nor did I notice that she had one."

"May we search the clothes you wore last night. In the struggle to save her it might have slipped off, you know, and lodged somewhere. Stranger things have happened in our experience."

"There are the clothes I wore last night," Tom said, pointing to the smoke begrimed and scorched suit lying on a chair in the room.

They took up the suit and searched all the pockets very deliberately.

"Ah! Here it is!" the taller of the two exclaimed, holding up a diamond cluster ring to view. "It was in the waistband pocket of your trousers."

Tom was almost paralyzed as he gazed at the sparkling jewel.

"You see, we know how these things happen sometimes. Mr. Morton said if we found the ring not to make any arrest. We shall take it to him and that will be the end of it. Good-day!" and ere Tom could utter a word in reply he was alone in his room.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF THE DIAMOND RING.

To say that Tom was astonished at what had taken place would not express it at all. He was dumfounded—speechless with amazement, and he dropped down on a chair and gazed at the wall in front of him till his brain was in a whirl.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

"That is a game played on me! That ring was not in that pocket!" and he seized the trousers and turned the waistband pocket inside out.

"Ah!" and he stood rooted to the spot, for the entire bottom of the pocket was gone.

It had been worn out!

He sat down to think.

"Why was it done?" he asked himself, gazing at the wall again.

"Is any one trying to make me out a thief? Did Miss Pelham send them here to search me? Ah! I have it now! Al Morton is at the bottom of this. He seeks to ruin me, and he has got the game all in his hands, too. What good will any denial from me do against the fact that it was found in

my pocket? Lord, what a mean revenge! If I can save myself from such a charge I'll break every bone in Al Morton's body and then take the consequences? Oh, I see through it now! Dick Allgood said in that drugstore last night that Al would be jealous of me because I had saved her life. To make her think I am a thief is the object of this little game. Heavens! but he is mean enough to betray his own mother!"

Tom paced back and forth in his room like an enraged tiger.

He was trying to make up his mind what was best for him to do under the circumstances. There were features about it that puzzled him.

"I'll go and see the chief about it," he finally decided, and in a few moments he was on his way downstairs to get something to eat before going out.

He called at the office of the fire chief, but that official was not in. Quite a number of citizens who recognized him rushed forward and shook hands with him.

But he wanted to see the chief and went in search of him.

He met Ben Stewart, one of the boy firemen.

"Glad to see you, Tom," Ben said. "We were afraid you were badly hurt."

"Well, I was. I feel sore all over yet, but I guess I can keep on my feet. Come on and help me find the chief. I want to see him."

So Ben went along with him.

Some one told him the chief was at the Carlton House, and he went there.

The moment he entered the hotel a rush was made to shake his hand and congratulate him on his heroic work the night before. He was very modest about it, and said he had tried to do his duty.

"Ah!" cried a strong-voiced man behind him. "Let me take your hand, my boy!" and ere he knew it he was shaking hands with Leonard Morton, the rich banker. "You saved the lives of my daughter and niece last night at the risk of your own. If you ever need a friend come to Leonard Morton," and he wrung Tom's hand with such vigor the young fireman wondered if he knew about the diamond ring.

"I am glad I was able to do what I did, sir," Tom replied.

"So are all of us," returned the banker.

A few minutes later a servant came to Mr. Morton and told him that the ladies wanted to bring the young fireman upstairs so they could thank him.

Tom heard her and promptly spoke up:

"Tell the ladies a fireman does not expect thanks for doing his duty."

"You must go up with me," Mr. Morton said.

"Indeed, sir, I cannot."

"Why not?"

"Because I came here on other business, and must defer seeing the ladies till some other time. Ah, chief! Glad to see you! I went to your office to see you, but you were out. I have urgent business with you."

"Come on, then," said the chief, "we'll go back there," and he led the way, followed by Tom and Ben.

Once more in the chief's office Tom shut the door, bound him and Ben to secrecy, and then related the story of the ring, together with an account of his encounter with young Al Morton just a few moments before the fire broke out the night before.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the chief. "I saw that ring on her hand as young Morton bore her away in his arms!"

"So did I!" exclaimed Ben Stewart, "and I know a dozen others who must have seen it, too."

"Then that lets me out!" Tom said, his eyes filling with tears. "But somebody is trying to ruin me."

"Do you know the two men who found the ring?" the chief asked.

"No, but they said they were detectives employed to hunt up the ring."

"You would know them again?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, I think young Morton has played the trick to make Miss Pelham think you an unworthy character. Let's see how many saw the ring on her hand as he bore her away. We can find out without letting the secret out. Don't mention it and we'll see if anything comes of it."

They agreed to follow his advice and then left him to go to the engine-house of Mazeppa No. 2. Very few of the members were there, as all of them worked for a living.

Tom was talking with one of the boys, when an elderly woman came in and asked:

"Is Mr. Hazen here?"

"Yes," said Ben Stewart. "This is Tom Hazen."

She came up to Tom, looked him in the face for nearly a full minute, after which she said:

"Pardon me, sir. I wanted to get your face on my memory so I could never forget it. I've got it now. I am a poor woman and can give nothing but my prayers for what you did last night. Oh, I shall never cease to pray for heaven's blessings on your head!" and she seized his hand and covered it with tears and kisses.

Tom and the others took off their hats, and she continued:

"You saved me from a horrible death last night, and then fought that maniac to save my daughter—my only child. We lost everything. Have nothing left in the wide world, not even a change of clothing. But you saved our lives and we are grateful."

"Madam, give me your name?" Tom said, as she turned to

"My name is Mrs. Raines, and my daughter is named Dollie. A neighbor two doors west of the house that was burned has given us shelter. Dollie works in the factory on Dover street and can earn enough to feed us."

Tom wrote her name and address in a little notebook and said:

"I'll call and see you soon."

"Dollie wants to see and thank you ever so much," she said, turning and leaving the engine-house.

"Now, we must help her," Tom said, turning to Ben Stewart. "She is a heartbroken woman if I ever saw one."

"That she is and we can do a good deal for her if we try," said Ben Stewart, brushed tears from his eyes with his sleeve and he spoke.

"Of course we can and we must," put in Tom. "I'm going back to the Carlton House and make Mr. Morton put up something for her. He was injured and she was not."

"Yes, that's so. You see him Tom, and make him come down."

"Better wait till to-night," suggested Ben. "It would be better than to go now."

"I believe you are right. I will wait till evening," said Tom.

In the evening Ben Allen came to the engine-house, having been fixed up and right at the hospital. The boys crowded round him and shook his hand.

"How is Jack?" they all asked him.

"Jack is doing well, and may get out to-morrow," he replied.

"Good—good! We'll have a celebration when he comes."

Quite a number of citizens came in to congratulate the young firemen, and one said:

"The ladies are going to present you a silk banner on

which will be worked the names of those whose lives were saved last night."

"That will make trouble," said Tom, shaking his head.

"In what way?"

"Some of the Vigilants ran up the ladder and brought down several women."

"Yes, after your boys had gone in and brought them out."

"True; but they had to be brought down before they were safe," returned Tom.

"I guess the ladies will do all hands justice," remarked one of the citizens.

"I hope they will. But I want to raise some money for Mrs. Raines. She and her daughter lost everything they had last night."

"Very good; here, put me down for ten dollars," said the citizen, handing Tom a bill.

"Yes, here's another for me."

"And here's a five for me," and a dozen men paid in over sixty dollars in less than five minutes.

Tom wrote down every name and the sum paid by each, and then said to those about him:

"I am going to the Carlton House and see how much I can raise there. It will take several hundred dollars to fix 'em up in another home."

When he entered the hotel, he asked the landlord if he could canvas the guests for subscriptions.

"Yes, my boy, and here's a tenner to start with."

"Thank you, sir," and he went among the guests and citizens, and soon he was surrounded by a crowd, all eager to give something and shake his hand.

Al Morton was there, and took four well-known citizens aside, to whom he said:

"See here, if you want your money to go to that poor woman, send it to her by one who will give it to her."

"Why, what do you mean?" one asked. "Isn't he honest?"

"Let me tell you something, and then you can judge for yourself," and he told them about the detectives finding the diamond ring in Hazen's clothes that morning and its return to its owner, adding: "We can't prosecute him under the circumstances, you know. He is brave enough, and all that, but that's all."

After that no more money was given Hazen in the hotel that evening. Tom noticed that he was eyed suspiciously by many.

"Ah!" he thought. "Al Morton has told that story of the diamond ring. I'll wait till I have my proofs and then his father will have to spend some money to keep him out of jail."

Half an hour later he told some of those about him that he would go and give what money he had received to Mrs. Raines, adding:

"The sooner she gets it the happier she will be and the better she will sleep."

"Yes, but you had better give it to her to-morrow," suggested some one in the crowd.

"No, I will go to-night."

Al Morton stepped out of the hotel and held a whispered confab with a man on the sidewalk. The man hurried away, and Al returned to the crowd in the hotel.

Ten or fifteen minutes later Tom and Ben Stewart left together to go and see the Widow Raines.

CHAPTER VI

THE WIDOW RAINES.

When they had gone but a few blocks, Ben said to Tom: "Let's go up to the factory and get something to eat and car- ride with. There's a crowd waiting outside, you know."

"What have you got?" Tom asked.

"I've got clubs and slungshots."

Ben's father was a policeman, and he had quite a collection of such things on hand, taken from parties arrested during a service of several years.

Tom laughed and went with him, as it was not far out of their way, and so each one got a regulation slungshot with a cord attached to keep it from flying from the hand.

"I don't think we'd have any use for them once in ten years," Tom remarked.

"And yet we might," returned Ben. "No harm in having 'em, anyway."

"No, of course not."

When they turned the corner of the Carlton hat factory Ben said:

"This is the tough part just below us here."

"Yes, I know."

"Halt—hands up!" hoarsely ordered one of two men, stepping out from under the dark shadows of the big factory.

Both boys were startled.

"Hands up!" hissed the man in front of Tom, thrusting the muzzle of a pistol in his face.

Tom had the slungshot in his hand at the moment, the cord round his wrist.

He raised both hands above his head and brought the slungshot down against the man's left temple with such force as to drop him to earth like a log.

Ben let his fall plump on his man's nose, crushing it and sending him reeling backward.

Crack!

Crack!

Maddened with pain and dazed, the second man fired twice.

But his bullets went wide of the mark, and Ben, who was game all the way through, sprang forward and dealt him another blow full in the face.

As each slungshot had nearly a pound of lead in the business end of it a blow from one of them was a thunderbolt when well aimed.

"Give him another, Ben!" exclaimed Tom, springing forward and giving the would-be robber a blow on the shoulder.

He aimed at his head, but the man dodged in time to save himself. He had dropped his revolver, and then, seeing his pal was knocked out, he took to his heels and ran with all his speed.

"I've got his pistol!" exclaimed Ben, as he picked up the revolver.

"Here, on to it, then."

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

At the first crack they both ran with all speed for the engine-house of Mazeppa No. 2.

"It's in the Fifth Ward, Tom!" Ben said.

"Yes—hurry!"

They reached the engine-house just as the fire-engine was going out.

"Hurry! Hurry! Tom!"

Tom, without a word, threw off his hat and trumpet, threw off his coat and put on his red shirt.

Then he sprang away like a deer to overtake the fire-engine.

Tom was a good runner and overtook the others when within ten yards of the fire.

He was a good runner in the water of a row of buildings, and he was a good runner on the roof.

The fire was on the top floor, and their feet were on the roof below.

The fire was on the top floor, and their feet were on the roof below.

"Here with the ladders!" called Tom through his trumpet in front of the store on the right.

A ladder was quickly run up to the roof, and Tom and Dan Allen ran up it like two cats.

"Send up another ladder!" Tom called, and a second ladder was pushed up to the roof. There is was immediately run up to the roof of the burning store, and Tom and Dan hurried up there.

The janitor had his wife and two children out on the roof. She was a two hundred-pounder, and was running about the roof wringing her hands and screaming at the top of her voice.

"Attend to your wife," Tom said to the janitor, "and we'll get the two children down all right."

The two young firemen each seized a child and ran down the ladder with it and gave it in charge of other firemen, who hurried down to the street with them.

Tom looked up and saw the janitor vainly pleading with his wife to go down the ladder.

She had never done such a thing in her life, and fully believed it certain death for her to undertake it.

"Come, Dan," Tom called. "We must go up and help him."

They both ran up to where the janitor was struggling with the frantic woman. She was wringing her hands and screaming with all her might. The flames were now coming up through the scuttle with fiery fury.

Tom placed his trumpet close to her ear, and yelled:

"Shut up or burn up!"

She came near falling off the roof in her consternation.

But she shut up at once.

"Go down, quick! You have no time to lose!"

"My children! Oh, my children!"

"They are safe down on the street with friends."

She started to go down, and on every rung she had to stop to scream. Being so heavy, the long ladder swayed and sagged under her movements.

But she finally succeeded in reaching the lower roof, and to the amazement of the firemen down there refused to go down the ladder which led to the street. She broke away from them and ran over a half dozen roofs to the end of the block.

"Let her go!" Tom called out to them.

But they had followed her two roofs away ere he called.

Just a moment later there was an explosion below, and the roof on which the ladder rested caved in and the ladder fell with it.

A groan came up to Tom and Dan from the crowd below, for they seemed to be entirely beyond human aid.

"Tom, we are lost!" Dan called out to him.

"There's another side," Tom replied, going across the roof to the other side.

To his amazement the roof of the store on that side was in a blaze.

"This looks bad for us, Dan," Tom said very coolly. "But we won't roast if we can help it."

"No; but can we help it?"

"I don't know," and Tom shook his head. "To jump is to die, and to stay here is to roast."

He walked over to the front end of the building and pointed down at the multitude in the street.

It was a sea of upturned faces.

This time they did not call to him.

They could see no hope of escape for the two boys, and they gazed up in grief and horror.

The flames burst through the roof, and the boys were under their feet.

"Tom—Tom!" cried Dan. "There's a dozen telegraph wires lying across this roof going to either end of the block."

Tom wheeled round and gazed at the wires.

The building on which they stood was the highest by two stories of all in the block, hence there was a sharp decline on either side.

"Dan, we can save ourselves!" he cried. "If we can find something that can stand the friction we can slide clear down to that third roof!"

"If we could stand the heat! The flames actually reach the wires now!"

"Here's some old wire!" and Dan sprang forward to a corner where the linemen had tossed aside some remnants of wire months before.

Tom seized it, bent it and then sprang forward and looped it over four of the telegraph wires.

Dan did the same with another coil, each doubling four times.

That done Tom ran to the front and sung out through his trumpet to the crowd below:

"We are going to slide over on the wires! Send help to the roof of the third house!"

A groan came up from the crowd below, for the flames were now above the wires.

The two brave boys ran back to the wires and stood under them.

"Dan!"

"Tom!"

Their hands met in a firm grasp.

"It's our only chance, Dan!"

"Yes, our only chance!"

"Come on, then!" and Tom held on to his loop and sprang over the roof—over the seething cauldron of fierce flame—and quickly disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH TOM DOES A GOOD DEED AND IS LOCKED UP.

Never before in the annals of conflagrations was a multitude of spectators so thrilled with horror and suspense as were those in Carlton that night when Tom Hazen and Dan Allen slid along the telegraph wires through a seething mass of red flame.

Strong men shuddered and many women shrieked and fainted.

The terrible suspense lasted but a few seconds, though they seemed like minutes to people holding their breath as if unable to breathe.

Just as a flash the two brave boys shot through the red flames and reappeared on the roof of the third building, which had not as yet been caught by the devouring element.

Then came a burst of joy from below drowning even the howling roar of the conflagration. Men fell on each other in wild exultation.

"Ho—ho! Hoony! There they are, they are saved! Whoo! Whoo!"

But their clothes were ablaze and hair badly singed.

Bill Saxton turned a stream of water on them which fell in a shower all about them.

Tom turned and hugged Dan in his joy.

"Oh, it was a close call, Tom!" said Dan.

"Close call? I would rather tackle another maniac than do that thing again."

"You would?"

Four of the boy firemen ran up the ladder to them and again a great shout greeted them as they shook hands all around.

Tom went to the front end of the building and sung out:

"Turn the water on the next houses!" and the order was obeyed.

The two descended to the street and again wild shouts told how painfully the crowd had watched their narrow escape from a horrible death.

But Tom did not relax his vigilance in watching the battle between fire and water. Trumpet in hand, he was here and there and everywhere, till at the end of two hours the flames were under control. Another hour was sufficient to put out every spark and remove all danger of any renewal of the conflagration.

Wearied and smoke-begrimed, the young firemen prepared to return to their quarters. Tom had just given the order for them to start when two officers came up to him.

"You are Tom Hazen, are you?" one of them asked him.

"Yes," he replied.

"Well, we want you. Come along!"

"What's the matter?"

"Come along and find out," and he laid hold of his arm.

"Hands off," said Tom, pulling away from him. Instantly both grabbed him and tried to handcuff him.

Ben Stewart instantly suspected the cause of the arrest and sung out:

"Here, boys, help Tom!"

With a rush the boy firemen swarmed around, over and on the two officers, hurled them to the ground and made mops of them.

"Help! Help!" cried both officers, and in a moment or two the wildest excitement prevailed.

"What's the trouble, boys?" the foreman of Vigilant Fire Company asked, as he and a dozen of his men came up.

"Hanged if I know," said one of the boys. "Somebody said for us to help Tom, and we pitched in."

"Two men arrested Tom," said one, "and no man can do that when he is on duty—not if we know it."

The two officers finally got on their feet and fled in the darkness of the night, and the boys crowded around Tom to inquire what it was all about.

"Hanged if I know," Tom replied, "unless it is for downing two men just before the fire bell rang."

"Who were they?" a dozen asked.

"Don't know. Ben and I went to the Carlton House to get some money for the Widow Raines, and were on our way to see her when we were halted by two men, who told us to hold up our hands. Luckily for us we each had a slung-shot, which we got at Ben's house on our way to the widow's. We just let 'em have it in their faces and downed 'em. Just a moment later the bell clanged and we hurried off."

"Well, they don't run you in for that, eh, boys?" sang out Bill Saxton.

"No!" came with a yell from every throat.

"Oh, I'll go and see about it in the morning," Tom said: "Let's all go home now. We have no more work to do here."

The boy firemen at once prepared to return to their quarters. They were all angry at the attempt to arrest Tom when on duty at a fire, and an attempt to do it again would have resulted in great damage to the arresting parties.

Tom still had in his pocket the money which had been contributed to the Widow Raines, and on arriving at the engine-house he told the boys about it.

"Somebody knew I had it," he said, "and bid for us to rob us. I think I'll stay here all night for fear the police may lay for me at my boarding house."

"And we'll stay here with you," Ben Stewart sung out, and the whole company said the same. They slept on the floor and benches and horse blankets till sunrise. Then they arose and bathed hands and faces downstairs.

"Now, boys," called out Tom, "let's all call on the widow and give her this money. It will do her good to have us all go."

"Whoop! Just the thing!" some one cried, and they all prepared to go.

"We'll march two abreast," said Tom, and that way they started out.

The Widow Raines was up helping the poor family with whom she had found a temporary home.

Tom knocked on the door, and Dollie Raines herself opened

She was a very beautiful girl—regarded as the prettiest in all Carlton, though only a factory girl.

She did not know Tom even by sight, and when he asked her if Mrs. Raines was in the house replied that she was.

"Will you please tell her that Tom Hazen and the members of Mazeppa No. 2 wish to see her?"

"Ah, you Tom Hazen?" she asked, looking him full in the face with an eager light in her eyes.

"Yes," he replied.

"I am Dollie Raines. Oh, I owe my life to you!"

Tom gazed at her in silence for a moment or two and then replied:

"Well, I am glad of it. It's the prettiest debt owing to me, and I am going to let you owe it," and he extended his hand to her with a laugh as he spoke.

"Oh, I shall never forget I owe it. But for you I would not be here now."

Mrs. Raines came to the door on hearing her talking, and

"Oh, the fire boys are all here!"

"Yes, madam," Tom replied, lifting his hat. "We have all come to see you and Dollie. We have raised some money for you with which to buy furniture for a new home. Here it is," and he handed her the roll of bills.

"Oh, you have saved!" came from her, and then there followed a choking exclamation of "God bless you!"

Tom and many of the boys hastily drew their gloves from their eyes.

"Now, boys," he said, turning away, and in another moment they were silently marching away, leaving the mother and daughter together in their joy. They went round by Tom's dwelling house and left him there, after which each went to his own home.

Immediately after this, Tom ate in a hurry and then ran up to his room to change his clothes. He left the slungshot there and hastened out to call on the chief of police.

He found the chief at his desk, and was received with a very warm greeting.

"Your company is wanted two policemen last night," the chief said.

"What had that to do with me?" Tom asked. "What did they want me for?"

"I had come to the captain here last night that you had been killed a man down on Bayard street."

"What was that man doing there?"

"He was in the house and came to the door."

"What was he doing there?"

"He was in the house and came to the door."

"What was he doing there?"

"Who—your boys?"

"No, your men."

"Ah!" and the chief's eyes flashed. "You will find it the other way, maybe."

Just then an officer came in and the chief ordered him to lock Tom up.

Tom was dumfounded.

But he made no resistance; he simply asked:

"What am I charged with?"

"I simply hold you till this matter can be investigated."

Tom said no more, and in another minute he was locked up in a cell.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DASTARDLY PLOT.

Let us go back to the two men who attempted to hold up Tom Hazen and Ben Stewart while on their way to see Widow Raines.

The reader will remember that just as Tom and Ben downed them the great fire bell clanged, and the two young firemen sprang away to their post of duty, leaving the two villains completely knocked out.

The man Tom had hit lay on the sidewalk like one dead.

The blow had fallen on his temple and had knocked him senseless.

The other man had been hit on the nose, just halfway between the end of it and the eyes, crushing in the bone and making an utter wreck of it. But he did not lose his presence of mind, save but a few moments. By this time the two boys were gone, and he was left alone with his companion.

The two pistol shots had been heard by others, and people came running in that direction.

"Jim, Jim!" called the man, stooping and shaking his companion. "Get up and come away!"

But Jim was like a dead man, and the other one growled out:

"Done for, as I'm a sinner!" and then sprang away, going direct across the street to avoid meeting those he heard coming.

A half dozen men came along and one stumbled over the man on the ground and fell.

"Hello! Here's a man down! Strike a match, somebody!"

One struck a match and held it close to the face of the unknown.

"This man has been killed!" exclaimed the man with the match.

"Yes, and we heard the shots," said another of the party.

"Call the police."

"What is it?" demanded a voice behind them.

"Here's the police!" exclaimed one as two officers crowded forward.

One held his lantern so as to cast the light on the prostrate man's face and remarked:

"I don't think he is dead. Call an ambulance."

The other officer hastened to a signal station and called an ambulance. In ten minutes the ambulance came and the man was placed in it and driven away.

The two officers then made inquiries about the man's name and found out all they could about it. No one knew anything more than that he had been shot down on Bayard street.

They were back to report the case to the captain of the police.

In the meantime, Al Martin, who was at the police station, was looking over the man's face and

where life Tom Hazen had saved. She was sufficiently recovered from the shock of that terrible night to sit up and move about the sumptuous apartments occupied by the Mortons. Al and his sister were with her when a servant brought up a message from the office below, to the effect that a man there wished to see him personally.

Al excused himself and went downstairs to the clerk's office.

"Where's the man who wants to see me?" he asked of the clerk.

"There he is," replied the clerk as he pointed to a young man of rather doubtful appearance, who was standing with his back toward the office.

Al went up to him, looked at him for a moment or two, wondering who he was. He was a total stranger to him. But he said, touching him on the arm:

"I am Al Morton. Did you send up for me?"

"Yes," replied the young man. "Come out on the piazza, please," and he led the way out, followed by Al.

When clear of any third party the young man stopped, turned to Al and said in a half whisper:

"Bryan is hurt and wants to see you at once."

"Hurt, did you say?"

"Yes, and wants to see you."

"How is he hurt?"

"Somebody hit him on the nose and ruined it forever."

"When?"

"Oh, half an hour ago or so."

"Wait till I get my overcoat and cane and I'll go with you."

Young Morton turned and re-entered the hotel, leaving the other waiting for him on the piazza. When he reappeared he ran down the steps, saying to the other:

"Come on."

The other followed, and soon they turned and walked hurriedly in the direction of the west side of the town. It was the rough side of Carlton, the home of the poverty-stricken portion of the city.

They halted in front of a dingy old frame house. The guide produced a key, by means of which he effected an entrance.

Al followed him inside, and the door was closed again. They made their way along a passage to the rear of the house to a door on the left. It was pushed open, and there, on a rude cot, lay a man whose face was swathed in bandages.

The guide left him there and returned to the front door.

"Why, what has happened, Bryan?" Al asked, as he went up to the side of the cot.

"Oh, I'm ruined!" was the reply in a husky tone of voice, "and Jim is in the hospital more dead than alive."

"Who did it?"

"These two young whelps had slingshots, and when we told 'em to hold up their hands they did so, but they came back again and we got it in the face. I am ruined for life."

"Good heavens! What's to be done?" and Al Morton was white as a sheet as he spoke.

"I think Jim is done for—his skull cracked. Go and have Hazen arrested for murder, naming Jim as the victim. The law master will be motive enough, and that will do the business for him. I can appear as a witness against him."

"Yes—yes, I see. I think that will settle him forever. I'll go and see the police at once. But is Jim done for, do you think?"

"He looked like a dead man, and they took him away like one."

"If he should be alive, he ought to be posted as to what to say."

"Yes, that's so. I'll see him in the morning. What are you doing in the morning early?"

"One hundred."

"Yes. I've got to pay a doctor and have good attention."

"That's pretty steep."

"You wouldn't have my nose for ten thousand, would you?"

"No, nor for a million. I'll send you the money," and Al turned and left the room. The guide met him at the front door and saw him off.

Joe and Jim Bryan continued to be private detectives, and had an office in a cheap quarter of the city. Young Al Morton had once employed them in some cases, but now had engaged them in order to run Tom Hazen. They knew nothing wrong of them, but did not recognize them as detectives at all.

On his way back to the hotel, Al passed a policeman whom he happened to know.

"Have you heard of the attempt to murder down on Bayard street?" he asked him.

"Yes. I saw the man and sent him to the hospital," was the reply.

"Have you got the murderer?"

"No—don't know who he is."

"I think I do," and then he told the story of the diamond ring, adding:

"I am sure it is Tom Hazen's way of putting a dangerous witness out of the way. Run him in and get the credit of it. If he is not the one, no harm will be done, you know."

Al went on and the officer at once began to see a chance to distinguish himself and get in line of promotion.

He walked along his beat till he met the other one who was with him when Jim Bryan was sent to the hospital. It did not take him long to tell the story, which Morton had given him.

"Let's run him in," he suggested.

"He's at the fire," said the other.

"Take him when the fire is over."

"We'll be off post then."

"Yes, and all the night long," said the other.

They thus arranged the matter and undertook to carry it out.

But instead of a prisoner they carried numerous bruises to the station and told the captain how they got them.

The captain sent up to the hospital to see what the wounded man had to say.

But the blow on his head made him still hazy, and he could tell nothing.

Thus matters stood, when Tom called on the chief of police the next morning and was locked up by that official's orders.

Ten minutes later it was known to the boy firemen that Tom was in a cell at police headquarters, and Bill Saxton at once went to see the chief of the fire department about it.

The chief was amazed, and at once sent a lawyer to take charge of the case.

The lawyer called to see him, and Tom told him his story.

"Ah, that man in the hospital is the robber, then?" the lawyer said.

"Yes; at least he tried to be. Ben Stewart and I happened to have weapons ready for them and thus saved ourselves and the money we were taking to Mrs. Raines."

"Well, we'll secure that fellow and see what he has to say about it. But you say there were two of them?"

"Yes, and the other one is hurt, too," Tom said.

"I'll see if we can find him," and the lawyer left him to go to the hospital.

To the satisfaction of the police, the man in the hospital was found to be the robber, and the man who was with him was found to be the other one.

But Jim Bryan was yet unconscious, the blow on his temple having been a hard one.

The lawyer came away and at once procured a warrant for the arrest of both the Bryans. The one in the hospital was safe enough, but the other one was not to be found. He placed the warrant in the hands of a constable, not a policeman, and told him to lose no time in bagging his man.

"He is hurt in the face," he said to him, "and may be in hiding somewhere under medical treatment."

The constable soon found people who knew the Bryans, and two hours later Joe Bryan was a prisoner.

He was all broke up over his arrest, and lost no time in sending for Al Morton again.

Al hastened to the station-house, pale and nervous, and asked permission to see Bryan. He was shown to Bryan's cell at once.

"They have jugged me," Bryan said.

"So I see. But what is it for?"

"The warrant charges me with an attempt to rob Tom Hazen last night."

"Good heavens! Has Jim been talking, I wonder?"

"I don't know. I never got a chance to see him."

"Well, I'll send a lawyer to take charge of your case, and will pay all the bills. But don't send for me again. Send for him. I don't want to get mixed up in it. If I do I'll be a ruined man."

"I won't say a word."

"Well, here's the money I promised to send you this morning," and he gave him a roll of bills as he spoke.

Bryan took the bills and concealed them about his person.

"I will try to find out if Jim has been talking," Al said.

"Both of you must tell the same story, or we will get into trouble. I never dreamed you would make such a mess of it, as you have."

"We never dreamed they'd be armed, either," said Joe Bryan, "or we'd have been more on our guard."

"Well, don't mention my name to anybody, and I'll see you through as far as money can. Don't forget that."

Al then left the station-house, and as he passed out the front door he glanced back at Tom Hazen and the chief of the fire department.

The chief had just bowed himself for Tom to bring him into court whenever wanted.

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

Two days passed and Jim Bryan came to his senses in the hospital. The blow on his head had come near being the death of him. As it was, he was still in a bad way, and the doctor thought he could do very little for him.

He did not know he had been placed under arrest, and asked that his brother Joe be sent for.

"He is hurt almost as badly as you are," the doctor told him.

"That's sorry for that," and he turned his face to the wall and remained silent after that. He feared to make any statement until he had seen Joe lest he endangered both.

Jim lay alone in the ward until the effort of the doctor Al Morton had sent for him. He lost no time in seeing Jim. The surgeon in charge gave permission with a nod, and he was shown into the ward where the patient lay.

"How are you?"

"How are you?"

"How are you?"

"How are you?"

"Yes, all except my nose. That will never be as it was again," and then he looked around the room to see if they were all alone. Leaning forward, he asked:

"Have you said anything yet?"

"No, not a word."

"Then we are all right. You must tell this story: We were attacked in the dark and nearly killed. We didn't know who did it till we heard Tom Hazen had claimed that he and a friend were attacked at the same place. Having knowledge of a robbery committed by him, we believe he plotted to kill us and thus save himself, and have had him arrested."

"Have you had him arrested?"

"Yes, on the charge of trying to kill us both. Morton backs us and has engaged counsel for us. He had me arrested, too."

"What for?"

"On suspicion of trying to rob him."

"Then they'll arrest me, too."

"Yes, very likely. Just stick to this story and we'll win sure. Oh, I'll fix him for this," and he laid a hand tenderly on the bandages that covered his broken nose.

Jim lay there silent for some minutes. Then he said:

"Well, it's the best we can do, I suppose."

"Yes, and we'll come out all right, for we have a good lawyer in charge of the case."

After staying out the time allowed him, Joe took leave of Jim and went away.

Days passed, and things quieted down somewhat. No fires occurred to draw the firemen out, and they were all at work in their various occupations.

But the boy firemen had a grievance, and could talk of nothing else when they met of evenings at their hall. They were all like a band of brothers, and the cause of one was the concern of all.

They could not understand why the governor's daughter had never thanked Tom for having saved her life. Mr. Morton had done so, it was true, but she had not.

One evening word was sent to them that a party of friends would pay them a visit at the hall on the following evening.

"That is a hint for us to brush up, boys," said Tom to those present.

"That's just what it means," said Jack Thorn, who had just left the hospital, and was again with the boys.

"Then we'll all brush up," Dan Allen said.

"Yes, and decorate Mazeppa No. 2," suggested a member.

"Of course yes," and committees were at once appointed to see to the decoration.

The next evening the hall looked like a bower of evergreens and flowers, while the engine downstairs was an immense bank of roses on wheels.

By eight o'clock young people of both sexes came trooping in, and the young firemen gave them a cordial reception.

The Widow Raines and Dollie ran up to Tom to greet and thank him.

Tom looked at Dollie, and thought he had never seen anything half so beautiful in all his life. She was dressed in a way to enhance her beauty tenfold. He bowed again, his eyes riveted to her blushing face.

"We are all glad to see you here, Miss Dollie," he said.

"I am more than glad to come and thank every one of you for what you have done for us," she replied, laying a little brown hand on his arm.

"But we don't need any thanks, for we did only what our duty demanded, and then——"

"Yes," said Jack Thorn, interrupting him, "but we just peaches and cream to have 'em come and see us, you know," and they all laughed at the remark.

Ben Stewart led a party downstairs and showed them the

engine, leaving Tom by the side of Dollie Raines, charmed almost to helplessness.

A few minutes later the musicians came and the hall was cleared for a dance. Tom led Dollie out on the floor and waltzed round and round the room with her. When he led her to a seat he found that many ladies and gentlemen had come in while he was dancing. He excused himself to Dollie and went to look after others.

In the crowd he noticed an elderly lady and a young, girlish figure by her side, standing near a window. There was something about the young lady's face that seemed a little bit familiar, and yet he could not recollect her.

He went up to the elderly lady and said:

"Madam, come with me to the other end of the hall and I'll get seats for you."

"Thank you," she replied, and they both followed him. He procured seats for them.

He turned to the young lady and said:

"I can't tell you how much we appreciate this visit from our friends."

"Oh, if you would keep open house one night in each week," she replied, as she took the proffered seat, "I think you would see us here quite often."

"I will tell the boys that," said he.

"How is it that Mazeppa No. 2 is always first at a fire?" he asked.

"I suppose it's owing to youth and enthusiasm," he replied.

"Are not the old firemen just a little bit jealous of Mazeppa's success?"

"Indeed, I cannot say. We do our best to beat 'em, and sometimes we succeed. We think we have a right to feel proud of our success."

"You certainly have. How many lives have you saved, Mr. Hazen?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"You keep no account of them?"

"Of course not."

"Don't call on the young ladies you save?"

"Not unless I am well acquainted with them. It would be cheeky on my part to do so. I did call on the Widow Raines the other day, but I went to give her some money our friends had subscribed for her. She lost everything in that fire, you know."

"Yes, so I heard. You were dancing with her daughter just now, were you not?"

"Yes."

"She is very beautiful."

"She is indeed. Do you like her?"

"Yes, I am fond of her."

"Will you dance me with this one?"

"Yes, with pleasure," and she came from the chair and went on the floor with him.

Some in the hall seemed to know her, and many wondered who she was. She waltzed round the circle with him. She was a very graceful dancer and Tom was proud of her.

When he led her to her seat again he asked for her name.

She looked up at him in silence for at least two minutes and then said:

"I am Miss Petham."

Tom looked at it again.

She was the governor's daughter!

He had never before had a notion of standing a chance with her. He turned white and red by turns.

She reached out and laid a hand on his arm, saying:

"I can tell you how and tell you that I believe in your success, and ever should you did not answer my letter."

"What, I never received any note from you," he said.

Clang! Clang!

The great fire bell struck and instantly the wildest confusion reigned in the hall.

Young firemen, who were waltzing round the room, flung their fair partners aside and made a wild rush for the engine-room below.

Like a huge leviathan bedecked with flowers the engine shot out into the street and went off like a roaring thunder-bolt in the direction of the fire in the second district.

The fire was in a business block and among a lot of frame buildings which were burning like tinder when the firemen arrived.

The chief of the fire department saw the danger that threatened that part of the city, and directed the main efforts of the firemen to prevent its spreading.

"Cut through the roofs and flood the stores on each side," was the order he gave, and the daring young foreman of Mazeppa No. 2 was the first on the roof of the store on the right.

Trumpet in hand, he gave orders in a quick, terse way that told how well he knew what he was doing.

Suddenly a barrel of oil exploded in the store below him, and the roof heaved up and sank down with a terrific crash, carrying him with it.

A cry of horror rent the air as a cloud of dust, smoke and sparks went up from the wreck.

CHAPTER X.

THE GOVERNOR'S DAUGHTER.

Tom Hazen was the only one who went down with the roof.

The others happened to be just near enough to the roof of the next building to escape the catastrophe.

For a moment or two Tom believed his usual good fortune had deserted him, and that now it was all up with him.

The flames burst through the broken roof in several places near him. He pulled himself together, and looked around him as well as the dust and smoke would permit.

The walls surrounded him on four sides. He seemed to be in an immense furnace, with a terrific fire beneath it.

Quick as a flash he thought of the asbestos line, which he had round his waist for the first time at any fire. He had ordered one for each member of the company, fifty feet long, and with a strong iron hook attached.

Asbestos would not burn even in the hottest fire, and that fact caused him to order the lines made in New York.

He almost cried out in his joy as he quickly unwound the line from around him. Then he cast the iron hook up to the top of the wall.

It failed to catch, and fell back at his feet.

Taking it up, he threw it again, this time clear over the wall.

It caught against something and he pulled hard on it to test the hold.

It seemed to be fast, and, gathering all his strength, he pulled himself up, his feet against the wall.

Just as he reached the top Dan Allen saw him, and with a cry of joy sprang forward and pulled him over on the other roof.

There he lay like one dead, having inhaled smoke and dust to the extent of suffocation.

"Here, Jack, let's take him away," Dan cried out.

Jack and Dan bore him still farther away to the next roof beyond.

His trumpet remained below with the wreck of the roof, but the boys did not think of that.

They heard the cry of:

"Save Tom, save Tom!" come up from below.

Jack Thorn ran to the end of the building and sang out:

"Tom is safe!"

"Where? Where is he?" came up to him.

"Up here on this roof!" he replied.

A shout of joy went up from the street, for all had been sure Tom Hazen was at last a victim of the element he had fought so heroically.

"Bring him down! Bring him down!" they called.

The chief of the fire department came up and saw him just coming to where he lay on his back.

"We must get him down from here," he said to Jack.

Tom came to quickly when he got started, and when they lifted him up to take him down the ladder, he said:

"Just wait a few minutes and I can go down myself."

They laid him down again, and the chief asked:

"Are you hurt?"

"I don't think I am, but I am full of smoke and dust."

"It might have been worse."

"Yes. I thought it would be, too."

"Yes, we all thought that."

All the firemen fought the flames like heroes, and by degrees got the mastery of it.

Tom soon went down the ladder, and was received with yells of joy by even the members of the rival companies.

When the fire bell clanged and called the firemen to their post of danger, the visitors remained at the hall of Mazeppa No. 2, hoping the firemen would be able to return soon.

They went on with the dancing, while a few ran to the fire, to see how long it would last. In the midst of a dance a young man rushed into the hall and sung out:

"There was an explosion and Tom Hazen went down with the roof."

Dora Pelham was not dancing at the time, but sitting with the elderly lady who had come with her.

She turned pale and sank back in her chair in a swoon.

Dollie Raines gave a shriek and came near fainting, as did several other women in the hall.

The elderly lady companion of Miss Pelham called for water.

Some one brought her a glass of ice water and she dashed it into her face. She came to with a gasp.

"Please call a carriage," the elderly lady said to a bystander, and in a few minutes the carriage was announced.

The two ladies were assisted out to it and placed inside.

"Where to?" the driver asked.

"To the Carlton House."

The party of visitors soon left the hall. Many repaired to the street to look upon the scene, and some to look upon the body of the daring young man. Among the latter were Widow Raines and her daughter.

The crowd of people in the vicinity, and the excitement of men and women on the fate of Tom Hazen.

"What a brave man!" exclaimed a man when he heard it. "I don't wonder he died of it. That fellow has more lives than a cat. Old Nick himself couldn't keep him in the box."

"But I don't think you will see him again."

"I don't know. I will see him again if you don't."

The crowd of people was still there.

"What a brave man!" said a third man. "You can't keep him from the box. I will see him again if you don't."

"Of course he did," said a fourth man. "He is down on the ground now, talking with the chief."

Dollie Raines sprang forward, caught the last speaker by the arm and asked:

"Oh, sir, do you know that to be true?"

"Yes, I do, for I was near the other side when he came down. I don't know how he got out, but he did."

"Oh, I am so glad!" and despite her effort to keep calm, she burst into tears. Her mother led her away and returned to their little home.

It took the firemen pretty near all night to put out all the fire.

The buildings were all of frame on that block and great fears were entertained for the safety of the entire block, hence none of the companies were allowed to leave the scene of conflagration until every spark had been extinguished.

When Dora Pelham returned to the Carlton House it was not known that she had been to the engine-house of Mazeppa No. 2 company. She had left the hotel in the afternoon to visit a lady who had been a schoolmate of her mother. While there she heard one of the young people say a party would go to the engine-house that evening, and a sudden impulse urged her to beg the lady of the house to go with her. They went, and no one knew them, much to their gratification.

When in her room once more Miss Pelham seemed completely prostrated, and Mrs. Morton wanted to summon a physician.

"No, no!" she said. "Just let me sleep, please," and they left her alone.

In the morning she seemed to have slept but little during the night.

"To think he had believed me ungrateful," she said to herself, as she stood before the mirror arranging her hair. "He said he never received any note from me. I must see Cousin Al about that. He told me he had mailed it instead of giving it to him in person. Strange he never received it. I know Cousin Al thinks him a dishonest man, but I cannot think so, and I am glad I told him so before he went to his death. Oh, it seems so strange that one so brave, so ready to risk his life for others should perish so horribly! I will send for a paper and see what good they say of one so brave."

She rang for a servant and asked that a morning paper be sent up to her.

It soon came, and with hands trembling and eyes ready to fill with tears, she sat down to read it.

Suddenly she sprang to her feet with a cry of joy, but as quickly checked herself.

"Oh, I might have known it," she said. "They did think he was lost, but I might have known the Fates would be kind to him. Heavens, what narrow escapes he has had within the last two weeks! And he, too, but a mere youth, while there are so many older firemen than he. Oh, I am so glad he is alive! I shall see him and have him tell me about receiving my note."

She sang as she completed her toilet, and her aunt and cousin came in to congratulate her on being so well after her indisposition of the night before.

"I never felt so well in my life," she said to them.

At the breakfast table she was told by her uncle that young Hazen had made a remarkable escape the night before.

"Yes, I have read the account of it," she replied. "He is a most remarkable young man, and most really a champion life."

"It really does look as though he did," her aunt replied.

"Yes, indeed," assented Miss Morton.

Al Morton said nothing.

He had seen her receive her diamond ring from Jim Hays with his report how he recovered it, and knew that she was

believed the young fireman to be a thief; at least he thought that way.

After breakfast she said to him:

"Cousin Al, I am going to pay Mazeppa No. 2 a visit at their hall some evening this week, and would like to have you go with me."

"You really don't mean it!" he said.

"Yes, I do. I don't believe he received my letter, and I am going to tell him how grateful I am for saving my life at the risk of his own."

"Cousin Dora, you know what he is. Why should you wish to come in contact with such a man—or boy? They are all alike, too, all of the common rabble of the workshops."

"If a dog saved your life, would you not be grateful to him?" she asked.

"A human being and a dog are very different."

"Yes, and a human being devoid of gratitude lacks one great requisite of humanity."

That made him wince.

"I am not lacking in gratitude, but——"

"Then come with me and help me show my gratitude to one who saved my life. I am going to send word to him that we are coming to the hall to-morrow evening."

"I would not advise you to do that. Better talk to father about it first," and Al seemed to be very much worried over it.

Then he said in a half whisper:

"You have no idea what a rough, uncouth youth he is."

"Yes, I have. I have seen him since the night of our fire."

"You have? Where?" and he seemed very much astonished.

"At Mazeppa's hall," she replied.

He started like one shot and asked:

"Have you been there?"

"Yes, and danced with him."

He turned pale, as death and walked away, leaving her alone near the window.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOVERNOR'S DAUGHTER MAKES A DISCOVERY.

It would be extremely difficult to describe the emotions that filled the soul of Al Morton when his beautiful cousin told him she had not only seen the young fireman who had saved her life, but had danced with him. He could not have described them himself, for he was in such a whirl that anything like reason and judgment seemed impossible with him. He loved her to such extent that he was willing to do anything, commit any crime—for her sake, or for the sake of saving her his own.

She had not really encouraged him, nor had she discouraged him. She had accepted his attentions more as a homage to her sex, and relationship to the family, than to a more tender passion.

He had told her he had loved her, but she seemed to look upon it as a comradely love, not that of a lover, and so she laughed and danced and flirted with him till his head was turned and his heart in a perpetual flutter.

He knew her generous, reticent nature, and now that she had again met the handsome, daring young fireman who had saved her life, he had reason to feel alarmed.

"If they meet often," he muttered to himself, "they will fall in love with each other, and then I am done for. I was afraid of that all along, and that is why I sent the Bryans to make believe they had found her ring in his possession. I thought it had been stolen and that she believed him to be a dishonest character. I don't know what to make of her

going there, and that, too, without letting any of us know of it. I'll have to go with her and keep right by her side all the evening. I can't see how he can have the cheek to face her while I am there. But Lord! That fellow's cheek is so hard that even red hot fire has no effect on it. If he presumes too much I'll mention the ring matter right before his face and that'll knock him silly, I'm sure. His confusion will show that he is guilty. If she once gets it into her head that he is a thief she would never speak to him again. Yes, I'll go with her and make sister go along, too."

The hall of the boy fire company was like a fairy bower that evening. Evergreens and flowers of every description adorned the walls. It was brilliantly lighted, and every member wore his neat fireman's uniform, and was eager to show his appreciation of the visit of the governor's daughter.

Invitations had been sent out to a number of other ladies and gentlemen, so that a crowd of friends was on hand, when Miss Pelham, with Al Morton and his sister, arrived.

Tom came forward to receive them. He ignored Al altogether and escorted the two ladies to seats prepared for them.

"Why, I did not know you were going to have such a crowd here this evening," Miss Pelham said to him as she sat down.

"We decided to do what we could to make your visit pleasant," he replied, "so we sent out for friends and music. May I have the first dance with you?"

"Yes, of course; but really I did not dream of dancing."

He laughed and said:

"You see, with us the unexpected is always happening."

"Yes; you were not expecting that roof to fall in with you the other evening, were you?"

"No, indeed, and if I had, you can rest assured I would not have been on it. I have no desire to be roasted."

"It was perfectly awful. The news came that you were killed, and you can't imagine how grieved we all were when we heard it."

"Thank you. I am glad some people think enough of us to sympathize with us. I lost all hope that night myself, and but for this line I would not be here now," and he laid his hand on a coil of lead-colored line the size of one's little finger that encircled his waist.

"Oh, that is the asbestos line I read about, is it? Do let me see it!" and she reached out and examined it carefully. "How strange it is it won't burn, isn't it?"

"Yes, it will remain whole in the hottest fire any length of time."

"It must be a boon to firemen."

"It is indeed."

"Mr. Hazen, I want you to bring Mr. Thorn and introduce him. He came very near losing his life that night. I want to tell him how much I admire his courage and daring exploits that evening. Is he here?"

"Yes, and he'll be too proud to walk when I tell him what you have just said."

She laughed and said:

"Well, I mean every word of it."

Just then the mayor of the city, accompanied by his wife and daughters, entered the hall, creating quite a commotion, for they were not expected.

"Please excuse me a few minutes," Tom said to her and Miss Morton. "I must give the mayor a welcome," and he hastened to meet the party.

"Ah, your honor," Tom said, turning to the party, "this is an unexpected honor, and I welcome you and your friends in the name of Mazeppa No. 2."

"Ah, my boy," replied the mayor, giving him a hearty shake of the hand, "we feel honored to be here. We have come

to spend an hour with you just to show your brave boys that we are proud of you."

That was too much for the boy firemen. They broke into cheers for the mayor, and the band struck up Hail Columbia, as Tom escorted the party to seats near where the Morton party were.

The mayor's wife and daughters were acquainted with the governor's daughter, and so it soon became a most pleasant party in that end of the hall.

Al began an animated conversation with the mayor's eldest daughter, and asked her to dance with him when the music began.

Tom led Miss Pelham out on the floor, and began the waltz with her. A dozen other couples followed.

"You said the other evening you had not received any note from me," Miss Pelham said to Tom, as they circled around the room.

"Yes, and I repeat it," he replied. "How did you send it?"

"I gave it to my Cousin Al to hand to you in person, and not finding you he sent it by mail."

"Ah! That accounts for it!"

"What does?"

"He never mailed it."

"But he says he did."

"All the same, I am quite sure that he did not."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because he hates me and didn't want me to get it."

"I know he does not like you; but why does he hate you?"

"Do you not know?"

"No."

"Has he never told you that he and I exchanged blows in front of the Carlton House just a few minutes before the fire bell sent me to his father's burning house?"

"Why, no! I never heard of that! What in the world was it about? I didn't even know you two were acquainted."

"Really, I don't think I ought to tell you. Dick Allgood and Randy Richardson were witnesses."

"But why should you not tell me?" she asked him.

"Because I think it would be in better taste on my part to let others do so."

"Will you let me ask you some questions?" she asked.

"Yes, as many as you please."

"Did you take a ring from my hand on the night of the fire?"

"No, I did not."

"Do you know you have been charged with having done so?"

"Yes. Two men, claiming to be detectives, came to my room the next morning after the fire and asked to let them look for a ring in my clothes. They claimed to have found it there, to my astonishment. I told the chief of the fire department about it, and he and five others have sworn that they saw it on your hand while your cousin was bearing you away in his arms. As I never saw you again that night, I could not have taken it. It was taken by some one else and used in an effort to ruin me."

"Then why should any one wish to ruin you? Have you an enemy?"

"I have your cousin."

"Is he the only one?"

"Yes, up to now."

"Will you, please, tell me the story of what happened?"

"Yes."

"I will tell you the story in another part of the hall, please, and I will be glad to hear of yours."

"I will be glad to tell you the story of what happened to me, and I will be glad to hear of yours."

When she had talked with him for a few minutes, she said:

"Please let me see the others, one by one."

Tom brought up the others and she questioned them as to their having seen the ring on her finger after her cousin took her from Tom.

"Will you swear to what you have told me?" she asked of each one.

"Yes, indeed," was the reply.

"Then keep all this a secret until I ask you to repeat it, please."

They readily promised to do so, and then she said to Tom:

"I am sorry you have had to submit to such an outrage, and I am at a loss to understand why it was committed. I believe you are utterly innocent of any wrong doing, and shall give my cousin a punishment he will not soon forget. But promise me you will not take any action in the matter without first letting me know of it."

"Certainly. Your wishes shall be my law in the case."

"That's good of you. May I present you a trumpet in the place of the one you lost the other night?"

"I would prize it as I would my life, Miss Pelham."

"I am afraid you don't prize your life high enough. That's why you get into such dangerous places," and she smiled sweetly at him.

Ere Tom could make any reply she added:

"My cousin is coming for me. Let's have another dance," and she took his arm and went out on the floor with him, leaving her cousin grinding his teeth in jealous rage.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DARING RIDE BEFORE THE ENGINE.

As his eyes followed his fair cousin waltzing around the room with the handsome young fireman, Al Morton developed into a human fiend.

He loved her madly, and the crime he had already committed to keep her from recognizing her rescuer in a social way was but the entering wedge to a more heinous one.

"It will turn his head," he muttered through clenched teeth. "She, the governor's daughter, he, a poor mechanic. She is romantic and generous and thinks it her duty to notice him and call him a hero and all that sort of thing. Oh, he can't help falling in love with her. He won't try to help it. As sure as the sun shines and the stars twinkle, just so surely will I kill him if he comes between us!"

There was a savage gleam in his eyes and his lips were drawn tightly over his teeth as he muttered this to himself.

He had never been bound by any good principles in his life. Now he was a savage fiend deep down in his soul, and his fiendishness was of a nature that would stop at nothing.

While they were dancing Dora Pelham said to Tom:

"When we stop dancing, take me downstairs and show me the engine. I have heard so much about it, and I want to see it."

"Certainly, with pleasure."

"But tell me, have you engaged to dance with any lady in the hall?"

"No, I have not."

"Then stick to me till some one else takes me off your hands."

"But that's just what I don't want any one to do," he replied.

"Oh, that would make some of the other girls angry."

"I don't think so. It will break up the gentlemen, the

"I'll tell that."

"I'll tell that," and she smiled at him.

In a little while they left the floor and made their way downstairs to the engine room, where the flower-bedecked engine stood.

"Oh, it's a beauty!" she said, as she gazed at the engine. "That is the driver's seat up there, is it?"

"Yes."

"Let me get up there," and she climbed upon the seat, laughing gaily as she did so.

Just then Al Morton was seen coming down the stairs.

"Give me a flowered hat, please," she said to Tom, and when he did so she placed it on her head, and, looking down at her cousin, called to him.

"Just look, cousin! I'm a real firegirl, ain't I?"

"Clang!"

"Clang!"

The great fire bell struck!

Tom sprang forward to lift her from the driver's seat.

At the same moment the well-trained horses dashed from their stalls and took their places on either side of the pole, while the harnesses dropped down upon them from above where they were kept suspended.

"Come down! Jump!" cried Tom, extending his arms toward her.

She jumped, but somehow she struck one of the horses and fell on the pole between them. She caught the harness with her right hand and saved herself. But the spirited animals dashed away at the signal.

Tom, covered with a spray of hoofs, but managed to throw himself completely over the animal's back, grabbed Dora around the waist and pulled her on the other side of the pole.

Quick as a flash she caught hold of the saddle of the horse, and pulled out to Tom.

"I am all right now! I am a good rider!"

He stood on the pole by her side, and kept an arm around her waist, and in that way they went clundering down the street, through the heart of the city.

People stopped and stared, but none knew the daring girl on the horse.

She was indeed a fearless horsewoman, as Tom soon found out, for she sat on the horse like a queen.

When they reached the scene of the conflagration, and the horses were unhitched, Tom quickly assisted her to the ground.

"Do your duty," she said to him. "I will wait for you if you are caught after me."

He ran toward headquarters, for he had placed his helmet on his head in the engine room. He was giving orders quick and clear through a tin trumpet, when she rushed up to him and placed her helmet on his head, and the cheers of the firemen and spectators. She then hurried back out on the way, but was met by the fire chief, who said:

"You have made a tremendous sensation to-night."

"I didn't mean to. It was an accident. I was run away with," and she laughed as she made the remark.

"Then I shall have to order them all under arrest for abduction," the chief replied.

"Don't do it till I say so, please," said she. "I really didn't mean to do anything and I am the one to blame. I enjoyed the ride!"

"But your friends at the engine house are in great fear for your safety."

"I am in no danger, am I?"

"No, not that I can see," replied the chief, and he looked up at the person on the roof of the burning building who was waving down to the girl of black hair and laughing mouth.

"What are those people on there?" she asked him.

"They are Tom Hazen and Jack Thorn, of Mazeppa No. 2." She started as if stung and her face paled.

"Why don't some of the men of the other companies go up and risk their lives, too?"

"They have. There are three others of the Vigilantes up there. There's one now—that man on the left!"

She gazed up at them like one bewildered, and then suddenly asked:

"Which one is Tom—Mr. Hazen?"

"The one on the right with the trumpet in his hand."

"But why don't they come down? Why do they stay there?"

She was growing terribly excited.

"They are trying to prevent the spread of the flames," the fire chief explained to her.

Al Morton dashed through the police line, seized her by the arm and said:

"The carriage is here, cousin! Come away. This is no place for you."

"I can't go yet," she replied, not even looking at him.

"I tell you this is no place for a lady. Come to the carriage," and he used enough force to cause her to turn on him with:

"Go back to the carriage and leave me alone, Al Morton!"

He quailed under the gaze of her eyes. He had never seen her look that way before.

But he turned to the chief and said:

"Can you persuade her to come away, sir?"

"If you do not leave me I'll call the police to take you away!" she said in a very determined tone of voice, and he turned and made his way back to the carriage in which sat his sister, leaving her once with the fire chief.

"You are very much excited, Miss Pelham," the chief said to her. "You should remain home with your—"

"How in the world are they ever going to get down from there?" she exclaimed, looking up at the men on the roof of the burning building. "Oh, the horses have burst through! They must come down at once! Why don't you call them down?"

"They will come down as soon as they satisfy demands."

Boom!

There was an explosion, and an immense cloud of dust, cinders and smoke went up, cutting off all view of the five men on the roof.

A piercing scream went up from Dora Pelham, and the chief caught her around the waist to lead her away.

"Come away," he said, hurriedly. "The walls may fall and bricks fly in every direction when they strike stone pavements!"

He hurriedly ran with her side into the crowd of spectators in his eagerness to get her out of the way of danger.

Then she called to him:

"Stop, please! I won't leave till I know the worst!" and she turned and looked up at the roof of the burning building again.

The five firemen were not there.

Not one was in sight.

A cry of horror went up from the crowd on the street, and the men hurried almost in silence back.

"There they are!" cried some one if the crowd near where she stood.

"Where?" she almost shrieked out.

"Sliding down a line from the top of the wall!"

She caught glimpses of a human form sliding down a slender grey line.

The line fell to the ground, and a ladder was run up to the roof.

Three firemen had climbed down from the burning tower.

The suspense was terrible.

"Oh, the wall shakes! It's going to fall!"

"Look out!"

"Stand back! Stand back!"

"Oh, heaven save them!" cried a shrill, girlish voice, as the crowd surged back out of harm's way.

"Look! Look! He hangs on the line, and the red flames play on him from that window!"

Bill Saxton turned the stream on him.

It was not known who he was in the tremendous excitement of the moment.

"See! His clothes are burning! Ah! He drops! Oh, oh!"

People buried their faces in their hands to shut out the sight of a brave man dropping to his death.

They looked again and saw another.

"It's Tom Hazen!" cried some one.

"Save him!" screamed Dora Pelham, and the next moment she broke away from the chief and ran full speed right up to the burning building.

CHAPTER XIII.

AL LEARNS HIS FATE AND DISAPPEARS.

The sudden dash of the young lady completely dumfounded the fire chief for a few moments, and she had reached a spot directly under the line upon which Tom Hazen was hanging by both hands ere he bethought himself of rushing to her side.

"My God!" he gasped. "The girl doesn't know what she is doing," and the next moment he was by her side.

At the same moment four other firemen darted forward and held the blanket under him, calling out:

"Let go, Tom!"

He let go and dropped on the canvas blanket they held for him.

A wild cheer went up from the firemen and spectators. But the fire chief did not wait a single moment where he was, for the heat was enough to blister one's face and hands. He seized Dora Pelham round the waist, lifted her clear off the ground and ran back with all the speed he could command.

Nor did he stop where she had stood before, but pushed his way through the crowd to a carriage some little distance up the street.

"Please put me down!" she called to him when near the carriage.

"Yes, in a moment," he said.

On reaching the carriage he said to young Morton:

"Miss Pelham wishes to return to the hotel. Please take charge of her."

"Certainly. I've been waiting here for her," and Al opened the carriage door for her.

"Tell me is Tom safe?" she asked of the chief, with a coolness that froze Al all up.

"Yes, perfectly safe."

"Then I'll go home. Will you be so kind as to tell him I enjoyed the ride very much?"

"With pleasure," was the reply.

"Then we'll go home," and she leaned back in the seat and utterly ignored her cousin.

Al was in no mood to talk to her. He saw she was excited and in a humor to quarrel with him.

"Oh, I had a glorious ride!" she finally said when near the hotel. "If I were a fireman's wife I'd join the company with him. It is so exciting."

"Yes, very," he replied.

"What do you think of a fireman?" he asked him.

"It is not a gentlemanly calling," was the reply.

"Oh, indeed! I find quite a number of gentlemen among them, though."

"That's more than I have been able to do."

"Perhaps you have never tried."

"I have no desire, I'm sure."

His coolness somewhat puzzled her. She was trying to punish him by pretending to be quite in love with all firemen, hoping he would do or say something to give her a chance to crush him with the knowledge she had of the diamond ring business.

But he seemed to be afraid to say anything to irritate her, and in a few moments more they were at the hotel.

He sprang out and assisted her and his sister out. The two girls ran in and up to their rooms. Dora feared the news of her wild ride had reached the hotel, but it had not. Up in her room she told her cousin how it had happened.

"Then it was purely accidental?" her cousin said.

"Yes, entirely so."

"What was the matter with you and Al?"

"Oh, he is down on all firemen and I am down on him."

"What for?"

"He makes himself so disagreeable."

"I didn't know that."

"No, of course not. I had to tell him if he did not let me alone I'd call a policeman."

"Yes, he told me that, and he is just heartbroken over it."

"Oh, I was so excited I really didn't know what I was saying or doing. He actually caught hold of me and began pulling me away."

"He was afraid you would be hurt in some way."

"Probably he was, but he should have let me alone when I asked him to."

"He thinks so much of you," Miss Morton said, "and that should excuse him."

"I am sorry he thinks so much of me then."

The next day Al Morton, driven to desperation by the occurrence of the evening before, made up his mind to find out how he stood with the fair Dora.

He watched for the chance to speak to her alone, and said:

"Cousin Dora, I am at a loss to know why you treated me as you did last night. I love you more than my own soul, and want you to be my wife. Will you?"

"No!" she said, very firmly. "You are not the sort of man I could love, even were you a king of a vast kingdom."

He turned pallid—ashen hued—and leaned against a chair for support.

"Your conduct since the fire has caused me to despise you," and she almost hissed the words at him.

"What have I done to merit your displeasure, cousin?" he asked, suddenly pulling himself together.

"You really don't know, do you?"

"I certainly do not."

"You have not forgotten about this ring, have you?" and she held up her hand as she spoke, displaying the splendid cluster of diamonds.

"No, I have not," he replied.

"Then I need say no more."

"Did I do wrong to have it recovered and brought back to you?"

"No; you did wrong to take it from me and for me to use it as an instrument for the ruin of another man," and she looked at him full in the face as she spoke.

He winced slightly, but a moment later said:

"What are you hinting at, cousin?"

"Oh, my, how dull you are!" and a sarcastic smile played about her mouth.

"Did any one tell you such a story as that?" he asked, trying a cool bluff on her.

"Cousin Al," she said, "I don't wish to have a quarrel with you. I know the whole truth about the ring now, and in order to end the matter, I will tell you that Mr. Delmar, the chief of the fire department, and five other good men are ready to swear that they saw this ring on my hand after I was placed in your arms the night of the fire, hence Mr. Hazen could not have taken it before that time, and he never saw me again after that. The men who pretended to have found it in his pocket took it there with them. If you will tell me why you did such a thing I will try to forgive you."

"I never did such a thing. Those men swore to a lie."

She turned away and left the room, leaving him there as though rooted to the spot.

He was in the throes of a terrible desperation, and a gleam of savage fiendishness was in his eyes.

"It is all over," he hissed. "She shall have reason to hate as well as despise me," and with that he turned and left the room.

"What in the world is the matter with brother, Dora?" Al's sister asked a few minutes later. "He has been talking to you, and now he looks like death in the face. Did he propose to you?"

"Yes, and I said no. I am not in love with him, by any means."

"Oh, he looks awful. I am afraid he'll do something awful."

"I don't think he'll do himself any harm, whatever else he may do."

"Did he and you have a quarrel?"

"I don't know that it might be called a quarrel. It certainly was no lovers' quarrel, for I am not, and never have been in love with him."

"I am so sorry for him."

But as the fair Dora did not express any sympathy for him, his sister suspected that there was a really serious quarrel on hand. She went in search of him to get as much of the truth out of him as possible. He was not in his room, so she went downstairs for him.

Word came back to the effect that he was not there, and no one knew where he was.

"I'll wait till I see him," she said to herself, "before saying anything more about it to her."

She expected to see him at noon, but he did not make an appearance at the dinner table, and at once her imagination began to get in some fine work.

What if in his despair over the rejection of his suit, he had taken his life? The thought nearly crazed her.

"Dora," she said to her cousin. "What if he has killed himself? Many men have done so for love of women, you know!"

Dora burst out laughing, and her cousin was shocked at her laughter, and told her so.

"I am not laughing, dear," Dora replied. "I laugh because I well know that nothing on earth could make him do such a thing to himself. He thinks too much of his sacred person to even touch himself," and she again laughed with an abandon that caused her cousin to protest.

"Well and good," Dora said, and then changed the conversation.

That evening Al was still missing and his sister became very much alarmed. She went to her mother and told her of her fears. Of course the mother became alarmed, too, and went at once to her husband.

"It is not an uncommon thing for him to absent himself from home for several days at a time," the banker said, "so

we won't worry about it until a reasonable time has passed without hearing from him."

"How long would that be?" Mrs. Morton asked.

"Several days at least. But it would take at least ten years to make me believe that he had made way with himself," and he shook his head in a way that added a good deal of emphasis to his words.

Her fears were allayed for the time being, and the matter was dropped. But the young sister did not cease to let her imagination have full play, and so became a prey to all the fears that the feminine mind is heir to.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOTS IN A FIRE—A MYSTERY.

Several days passed and still young Morton had not been seen or heard from by any of his friends. As a matter of course the family kept their anxiety a secret from the public.

Nobody seemed to miss him save a few youths of his particular set, and none of them were in any way uneasy about him.

In the meantime a magnificent solid silver trumpet came by express from New York to Thomas Hazen.

On it was engraved:

"From Dora Pelham

"To Thomas Hazen,

"Foreman Mazeppa No. 2."

"Say, boys," Tom exclaimed, as he exhibited the beautiful work of art to the young firemen, "just look at this!"

They crowded around him and examined the trumpet with the deepest interest. They felt that it was as complimentary to the entire company as it was to him. Not one envied him its possession.

"Oh, but it's a daisy!" exclaimed Jack Thorn.

"So it is," said Ben Stewart.

"And so is she," put in Dan Allen.

"So say we all of us," cried half the crowd present.

"Oh, but didn't she stick to us that night when she rode to the fire with us?"

"Yes, she did."

"Let's ask her to ride with us on our parade, boys," suggested Dan.

"Yes, let's do it. Lord, but if she does we'll just scoop all the honors," and Jack Thorn became very enthusiastic over the matter.

"Just hold up, boys," cautioned Tom. "Miss Pelham is able to give us this thing because she is rich and the daughter of the governor of the state. The others whose lives we have saved would do as much, too, were they able, but they are not. But we must not ask her to ride with us and not invite the others. That wouldn't do."

"You are right, Tom," said Ben Stewart. "I don't think she is too proud to go with the others."

"I don't, either," Tom replied. "She is the bravest girl I ever met."

That evening the entire company met at the engine hall to prepare for the coming parade of all the firemen of the city.

They were engaged in appointing committees, when the great fire bell rang out an alarm for the Fifth Ward.

Instantly every one was at his post and the engine and ladder truck went careening down the street like a roaring torrent.

It was a long run to the scene of the fire, which proved to be in an old building occupied by some very poor families.

The flames spread rapidly, and had a good headway on the firemen arrived.

"They are all out except an old man upon the third floor!" called out a workingman with a child in each arm.

"Up with the ladder, boys!" Tom sung out through his trumpet.

Then he turned to the workingman and asked:

"Which window?"

"Third one from the corner. There he is!"

They looked up and saw an old man with a long white beard appear at the window and wave his arms as though too much rattled to do anything else.

With his usual impulsiveness Tom sprang forward and ran up the ladder with a squirrel-like agility.

Ere he reached the window the white-haired old man had disappeared in the smoke of the room. Tom climbed in through the window and called out:

"Here, old man! This way for safety—quick!"

Crack!

A pistol shot rang out and struck the silver trumpet Tom held in his left hand.

"Here! This way!"

Crack!

A bullet crushed through Tom's leather hat.

Tom quickly suspected another crank, and fell heavily to the floor as if shot.

"That settled him!" he heard a voice say, and the next moment retreating footsteps were also heard.

"Well, you may roast for all I care!" said Tom, springing up and rushing for the window. "I don't want any more fooling with cranks," and he made his way down the ladder alone.

"Did you lose him?" Jack Thorn asked him.

"No. He's as crazy as a loon. He shot at me twice."

"The deuce! I don't know of any other old fire cranks are hanging around Carlton."

Others came up to him and asked about the fate of the old man whom they had seen at the window.

"Hello! Look at your trumpet, Tom!" cried Dan Allen.

Tom held up his splendid new silver trumpet and found a ragged bullet hole on two sides of it.

"That fellow aimed right at my head," he remarked.

"Did you see him?"

"Not clearly."

"We heard the shots and thought they were some weapons hurled by the fire."

As the building was an old one and all the occupants were old, the fire spread all over the building.

An old man, who had shot twice at Tom, was consumed in the fire spread all over the building, and the deepest interest was excited.

A couple of men said:

"He was not roasted. We saw him get out by the rear door, letting himself down by a rope."

"Are you sure?" Tom Hazen asked them.

"Yes, for I know him. He has been here but three days."

"And he slid down by a rope?"

"Yes, we stood by, and saw him come down."

"Well, I am going to find out something about this," said Tom, shaking his head. "I can't understand why he should do that."

"I guess," remarked a member of the company.

"I don't know," said Tom, "but I shall find out."

"I shall find out," said Tom, "but I shall find out."

Tom was mad as a hornet over the spoiling of his beautiful trumpet by the bullet holes that had been made in it.

Dora Pelham read an account of the shooting, and expressed a desire to see the trumpet again.

Tom called at the hotel with it and sent up his card. It came back with a verbal message that she did not wish to see him.

He was astonished.

"Did she tell you to say that to me?" he asked of the servant to whom he had given his card.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well," and he turned on his heel and left the hotel.

At the engine hall he was in a very bad humor, for he was under the impression that somebody had lied to him.

"What's the matter, Tom?" Jack Thorn asked him.

He told him.

"She never sent you that message, Tom," Jack said.

"How do you know?"

"Because she ain't that kind of a girl. She thinks too much of you to give you a douche like that."

"Well, that's the report the hallboy made, anyway."

"Something is wrong, Tom," Jack remarked, shaking his head. "I'd find out about it if I were you."

"How can I?"

"See Miss Pelham herself."

"But how can I? I tried to last night, you know."

"Get some one else to see her, or else write to her."

"Ah! I'll write her a note!"

He procured pen and paper and soon had a note written, sealed and addressed to her. It was sent to the post office.

"I won't hear from her till to-morrow morning, if I hear from her at all," he said to himself. "I'll go and see Mrs. Raines and her daughter. Mother and daughter would be a big card for us."

Early in the evening Tom started out to call on the Widow Raines and her daughter. It was a long walk from his boarding house, and he walked briskly in order to reach there at a reasonable hour.

He found them both at home and very glad to see him, and in a little while he had told how the boy firemen wanted them to ride on the ladder truck in the great parade.

"Miss Pelham has been invited, too," he said, "so you will be in good company."

"The members of Mazeppa Fire Company are good enough company for us," said the widow.

"Thank you," Tom said. "Still, the governor's daughter is good company, too."

"Yes. But if she should be on the truck I'm afraid you boys could not see any one but her."

"I don't know about that," Tom replied. "Miss Dollie here is the better looking of the two."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Dollie. "Did you come all the way over here to say that?"

"No, I did not. I made the same remark up in the engine hall yesterday, and didn't dream I'd have a chance to say so before your face. All the boys in the company say the same thing."

Dollie laughed, but felt proud and happy over the compliment. She was but a girl, after all, and no girl ever gets a thing like that. She and her mother agreed to ride on the truck on the parade.

"Can you ride a horse, Miss Dollie?" Tom asked the young girl.

"Dear me, no!" she replied.

"Why do you ask?" the widow demanded.

"If she can I was going to ask her and Miss Pelham to ride on the truck in front of the engine that day. I don't know if she will ride in the parade or not."

the widow, eager to give Dollie a chance to be seen side by side with the governor's daughter.

"But they might run away with me as they did with her," protested Dollie.

"No, a man will hold each horse's bit all the way. We would not have you run such a risk," and Tom's explanation decided her. She agreed to ride one of the horses if Miss Pelham would ride the other.

After a pleasant visit he prepared to return to his boarding house.

Just as he was about to leave Mrs. Raines showed him a heavy cane, saying:

"This is for you. It is heavy, but you may have use for it some time."

"Thank you. I'll keep it because you gave it to me," and he bade them good-night and left.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INCIDENTS OF A NIGHT.

When some blocks away from the humble home of the widow Raines, Tom Hazen grasped the heavy walking stick in the middle, twisting it around till he had it in the position of a revolving wheel.

He walked on till he came to a narrow street which ran through a hard part of the town. There he made the discovery that he was being followed by a man whom he remembered having passed several blocks back.

"He is following me," he muttered to himself, "and it may be that this club is worth more than I thought it was. I'll wait for him."

The man came right along, and Tom glared at him.

"Do you want to see me?" he asked, going up and facing him.

The man saw the club ready for use, and deemed discretion the better part of valor. He replied:

"No. I don't know you."

"Yes, you do. You have been following me."

"I have not."

"But you have."

"I have not!" and the man took two or three steps backward, making a motion as if to thrust his hand into his pocket. Tom sprang forward and dealt him a blow on the head with the heavy stick he carried, sending him to earth with a thud and stars dancing before his eyes.

The man's hat flew off and a bushy looking wig was disclosed.

"Hello!" Tom gasped, as he gazed at the prostrate man. "I knocked him all to pieces. I'll give him a good one!" and he stepped over him and fell in his pocket for a revolver.

"A six shooter! That's what he was carrying!" Tom exclaimed, looking at the weapon.

Tom looked and saw a policeman behind him. "What's the matter here?" he asked. "This fellow was trying to shoot me," he replied. "This fellow tried to draw a gun on me, but I was too quick for him."

"You were not trying to rob him yourself, eh?"

"No. I was not in the mood, am I?"

"No, you don't look so."

"Well, he is. Just see that man and how he looks!" and he gave him the revolver he had taken from the man's pocket.

Tom then took the man and turned every chamber. He put it in his pocket and then asked:

"What's your name?"

"I'm only a poor fellow."

"Well, how do you come to follow me and then to shoot at me?"

"Yes, of course I will."

The officer picked up the wig and put it in his pocket. Tom took up the hat.

"He has a false beard, too," the officer said, as the man began to pull himself together.

"The deuce he has!"

"Yes," and the policeman pulled the false beard off the unknown's face.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Tom in utter amazement. "It's Al Morton, or else I'm bewitched!"

"What! Do you know him?" the officer asked.

"Yes, I know him."

The officer grabbed the young man by the collar and pulled him upon his feet and shook him vigorously.

Al straightened himself up to his full height, glared at the officer and then at Tom Hazen.

The situation dawned upon him like a flash of lightning.

"What have I done to be arrested for?" he asked. "That fellow came up and knocked me down without provocation."

"But you tried to draw a gun on me, and here are the wig and beard you wore. Going about armed and disguised is enough to arrest any man for. I'll find out what your game is, even if I am locked up myself," and Tom turned and went long with them toward the station house.

They went two full blocks in silence, when Al said to the officer:

"He knocked me down."

"Yes, he says he did."

"Well, why don't you arrest him?"

"I have. He's going with us."

"But you haven't got hold of him?"

"No. I've got my gun and yours, so if he runs I can down him."

They hurried on toward the station.

Suddenly Al said:

"That blow has done for me. You have killed me, Tom Hazen," and with that his legs gave way under him, and he sank down in a heap like one in a sudden collapse.

"Hello!" exclaimed the officer. "He's worse hurt than I thought."

Tom looked at him in silence, and finally suggested that an ambulance be sent for.

"The signal box is on the next corner," the officer said. "Go and ring for one."

Tom hurried forward.

When halfway there he was startled by pistol shots.

Bang! Bang!

Looking back, he saw Al running and the policeman firing at him.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOM LEARNS OF SOMETHING IMPORTANT.

It took but a single moment for Tom to understand that Al had outwitted both him and the policeman.

The officer, believing his prisoner unconscious from the blow he had received on the head, did not keep as strict watch over him as he otherwise would have done. Al had played the fainting business with that very object in view.

The first thing he knew his prisoner was up and away like a deer.

Al was running for life.

Tom was a fleet-footed fireman, so it was fast running all round.

Tom came in sight of him as he passed under the next street lamp. But he was going like the wind.

Tom ran fast, but Al was faster, and soon he was out of sight.

He spoke hastily to them and one drew a revolver as Tom got nearer to them.

Crack!

A bullet whistled by Tom's head, and he came to a halt.

"Stop that fellow!" he cried. "He is the one to stop!"

"Kill him!" cried Al. "He is a murderer and tried to kill me! Give me that pistol!"

He snatched the weapon from the hand of the man ere the latter really knew what he was doing, and began blazing away at Tom, advancing at the same time.

Tom retreated, for he did not care to stop any bullets.

But the policeman came running up and gave Tom the revolver he had taken away from Al when he first arrested him, saying:

"Now let him have it!"

Tom turned and began firing.

The policeman opened fire, too.

The two citizens who had armed Al took to their heels when they saw that an officer was in it.

That demoralized Al and he ran, too, going down another street.

Tom and the officer both followed, blazing away at him.

It was amazing how the bullets could fly without hitting him! He seemed to bear a charmed life, and he was fast getting away from them again when another policeman in front of him sung out:

"Halt, or I'll shoot!"

"Don't shoot!" Al cried, coming to a full halt.

"Hold up your hands!"

Al held them up, and Tom and the two officers soon joined him.

He held a smoking revolver in one hand, and it was promptly taken away from him.

The next moment a pair of steel nippers were on his wrists.

"Come along, sir," the first officer said, taking the prisoner by the arm and leading the way toward the station house.

Not a word was uttered on the way, and they soon reached the station house.

The captain was at the desk. He knew Tom as the intrepid young foreman of Mazeppa No. 2, and greeted him with:

"Hello, Hazen! What is it?"

"Don't you know this chap, captain?" Tom asked, pointing toward Al.

The captain looked at him, shook his head, and said:

"No. What's he been doing?"

"I'll tell you my story, and the officer here can back it up with what he knows about it," and then he told all about it in as few words as possible.

"It's all a lie—I didn't attack him, or even try to," Al said, interrupting him. "I was in disguise because I was hunting for one who had robbed me some time ago. He knew me, so I had to get up a disguise."

"Well, I shall have to hold you, and let the court decide as to your guilt."

"You must be at the police court at nine o'clock to-morrow morning," the captain said to Tom.

"Yes; I'll be there."

"By all means it is very important."

On the way home, as the hour was not late, Tom went by the station house. He found Jack Thorn and Ben Stewart there. In a few words he told them what had happened.

By nine o'clock he was arrested and in five minutes it was known that Al Morton was locked up in a police cell on a robbery charge.

The banker came over and sent for Tom.

"I hear that you have brought the news that my son is in a police cell," he said to Tom.

"Yes, sir; but I did not intend to make it public. Someone overheard me telling my friends about it."

"That's all right. Which station is he in?"

"The James Street."

The banker called a carriage and accompanied by a friend hurried away to the station.

A crowd gathered to discuss the news, and Tom flatly refused to say anything more about it.

Just as he was going to leave the hotel a young man came to him and said:

"A young lady in the ladies' parlor wishes to see you before you go."

Tom half suspected who she was, and very promptly made his way to the ladies' parlor.

As he expected, it was Miss Pelham.

She greeted him with:

"I sent for you, for I wanted to ask if you received a message to the effect that I wished to see you."

"Yes," he replied, "and I called that evening, sent up my card, and was told you could not see me."

"Why, I never saw your card, and did not send down any such message," and she seemed very much surprised.

Ere he was aware of it he had spent two hours with her in the parlor of the hotel, and when he arose to leave she gave him her hand, saying:

"I shall expect you to bring that trumpet to-morrow evening."

"I shall do so with pleasure," and then he left and made his way downstairs.

Just as he and Jack and Ben were leaving the hotel they met Al Morton and his father coming in.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BANKER AND HIS HOPEFUL SON.

On reaching the station house the banker gave his name to the captain and asked to be permitted to see his son. He was shown into the captain's private office, and Al was sent for. He had a frown on his face, for he was annoyed at the situation.

Al did not know who he was to meet when he was ushered into the room. The pain of the blow he had received on the head still hurt him, and a lump half as big as an egg had risen there.

"What in the world have you been up to, Albert?" exclaimed his father the moment he entered the room.

"I have been doing some detective work in disguise, and got into trouble about it, that's all."

"But you are charged with shooting at the police, and——"

"No, I did not shoot at the police. I shot at Tom Hazen in self-defence."

"What's the trouble between you and Hazen? We all feel very grateful to him!"

"We had a fight a little while before the fire at our home, and he has been doing all he could to ruin me ever since."

By reason of his wealth and influence the banker was permitted to take Al home with him, promising to have him in court at nine o'clock the next morning.

On the way home Al told his father his side of the story, and in doing so did not confine himself to the truth, and so gained the favor of the old man more than ever.

They both saw Tom as they entered the hotel, but did not say anything to him. The banker wished to keep matters quiet until he had consulted his lawyer.

Early the next morning Dora Pelham sent for the banker, told him of the failure of his clerk in sending Tom's card up to her, and in fact told that thereafter all communications should be handed to her personally.

"I will do so with pleasure, and promptly discharge anyone who fails to do so," the landlord said as he bowed himself out of her presence.

In the meantime Mr. Morton had sent for his lawyer to go with Al to the police court and then to push the law on Tom Hazen.

The lawyer shook his head when he heard Al's story, and turning to his father, said:

"My advice is that you get out of this case as easily as possible, and then drop the matter."

"And not arrest Hazen?"

"No; if you do you'll get the worst of it. But let's go to the police court and see what the situation is."

Tom was there when the three alighted from a carriage. Mr. Morton, who had once pledged him a lifelong friendship, gave him a scowling glance and passed into the courtroom.

The policeman who had arrested Al corroborated Tom's story, and so the prisoner had no witness but himself. Cross-examination ruined him, and the case went against him. He was held in bail for a higher court. His father promptly gave bail for him, and they returned to the hotel together.

That evening the Morton family were denouncing Tom Hazen in the severest terms before Dora Pelham.

"What do you think of him, dear?" Mrs. Morton asked her niece.

"I think him entirely innocent," was the reply.

"Indeed! And what do you think of Albert?"

"I think he is wrong—guilty of crime."

"A criminal!"

"Yes, aunt, and I have the proof of it. If uncle goes to law with Mr. Hazen your son will go to prison."

Mrs. Morton came near fainting on hearing that, and then poured out a flood of wrath on her niece for daring to speak so of her son—her Albert.

"You had better scold him instead of me, aunt," Dora said. "I am not in any danger, but he is. If you want to know more I can tell you more."

"What do you know?" the mother demanded.

Then Dora told her mother everything, and cited the facts of Al's guilt.

Mr. Morton was dumfounded.

He was startled and entirely devoid of sentiment.

"If all that is true," he said to his wife, "a million dollars can't save him from State prison. The boy is a fool and I have no choice."

"But it isn't true, not a word of it!" gasped the mother.

"You can easily find out," Dora said. "I give you the names of the men who are witnesses. The chief of the fire department is one of them. Go and see him!"

"I will see Hazen myself," said the banker, "so don't say anything about it till I have talked with him."

"You can see him this evening," Dora said. "He is coming to see me and bring the trumpet with the bullet holes in it."

"Tom Pelham! Are you going to permit that low-born, vulgar fellow to visit you?" and Mrs. Morton's eyes flashed as she asked the question.

"Yes, aunt, I am going to receive him this evening in the ladies' parlor."

"I shall write to your father at once to send for you. You must come and watch over you."

"If father sends for me I shall go, of course. But I'll tell him all about your noble son."

That was a hard lot.

Mrs. Morton was proud of the name and fame of Dora's father, and dreaded to have him know aught that would give him a bad opinion of one of her children. She did not know what to do, and left the room.

Dora waited for the expected visit of Tom Hazen, and when she received his card she quickly repaired to the ladies' parlor to receive him.

"Oh, you have brought the trumpet!" she said, as she took it from his hands and examined the bullet holes in it.

Mr. Morton came in ere he could say anything to her, and said:

"Pardon me for intruding, but my niece said I could see you, too. May I ask you a few questions?"

"As many as you please, sir," Tom replied.

In ten minutes the rich banker had the whole story, and was mad enough to horsewhip his hopeful son.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TOM IS HURT AGAIN, BUT DOES NOT REGRET IT.

Ten minutes were enough for him to learn all the facts, and the crestfallen banker asked:

"If he will apologize will you let the matter stop at that?"

"Yes, if he will make a written one, stating what he apologizes for."

The banker was astonished at the firmness as well as the coolness of the young fireman.

"I'll have my lawyer talk the matter over with you," he finally said, as he rose to leave the room.

"If his time is worth anything to him," Tom replied, "tell him to have the apology written out and duly signed in the presence of a notary public. He will never move me from that point. I've got Al where he must behave himself or go to State prison, and am not going to let go of him."

Morton bowed and left the room.

"Oh, but I am glad you did not yield to him," Dora said, as soon as her uncle left the room.

"I am glad you are not offended with me," Tom replied.

"On the contrary, I am more than pleased," she returned. "If Al is not promptly held in check he will come to some bad end."

He told her that the boys wanted her and Miss Dollie Raines to ride on the engine horses in the big parade, and she agreed.

Suddenly the great firebell struck, and Tom bounded to his feet.

She sprang up, too, and threw the loop of the silk cord of the trumpet over his head, saying:

"Be prudent for—my sake."

Tom grasped her right hand in his and pressed it to his lips. Then with a bound he was away.

He knew that Mazeppa No. 2 would come that way.

In less than two minutes the roar of the fire engine was heard coming down the street. Tom waited in front of the hotel to join the boys as they came by.

An old beggar woman, evidently very deaf, came toward him from the opposite side of the street.

"Go back! Go back!" Tom yelled at her, but she slouched forward right in front of the coming engine.

"The old fool!" hissed Tom, and at the same moment the driver of the engine as well as the spectators cried out for her to go back.

Suddenly Tom darted forward to save her.

He caught her round the waist and fell to the stone pavement with her, and the engine barely missed them as it thundered by.

A few seconds later the light and bell truck dashed by and passed out of sight.

"He must be hurt," said a spectator. "He hasn't moved since he fell."

At that moment a young woman who had been sitting in the window of the ladies' parlor ran out and darted across the street, the first to reach the injured young fireman.

It was Miss Pelham, and she ordered him carried into the hotel, and had him put into one of the best rooms in the house, and the regular physician was summoned.

It proved to be a bad case of concussion of the brain, and not until the next morning did he come to in a way to know anything.

The first one he saw was Dora Pelham, who sat by his bedside.

"Where am I?" he asked.

"In the Carlton House," she replied. "You were hurt last night, and they brought you in here."

"Ah, I remember! The old woman—was she hurt?"

"No; she got up and walked away."

"Why didn't they take me to the hospital?"

"I would not let them. I wanted to nurse you myself," and though she was pale from loss of sleep, she blushed red.

"And you have been here all night, have you not?"

"The doctor says you must not talk too much. A man with a broken head must keep quiet."

"Is my head broken?"

"I guess it must be cracked a little as you won't keep quiet."

He smiled and gazed at her in silence for some minutes, and then asked:

"Will you let me say three words?"

"Yes, if you will keep quiet then."

"I love you."

Those were the three words, and when she heard them she leaned over and kissed him, and said:

"I love you."

His hand sought hers, and a profound silence reigned in the room till the doctor came.

A few minutes later a servant came in and whispered to Dora:

"Your father has come, and wishes to see you."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GOVERNOR AND HIS DAUGHTER.

On hearing that her father, the governor of the state, had arrived, Dora Pelham hastened to meet him. She found him in her aunt's room, of course, and was caught in his arms as quick as she could get to him.

"Are you really well, daughter?" he asked, holding her off at arm's length, and gazing at her with all the solicitude of an anxious father.

"Yes, father. I never felt better in all my life. How did you leave mother?"

"She is not well, and you must go to her as soon as possible," the governor replied.

"Then I'll go at once. I didn't know she was the least bit unwell. When will you leave, father?"

"At 4 P. M."

"I'll be ready by that time," and she hurried to her room.

She had been told by her mother that the governor was a very kind man, and that she should be sure to please him.

A few minutes later she spoke of the governor to her mother.

"He is at the bottom of this, I am sure," she said.

"For me, and mother, I am no more ill than I am."

"I am going to see about it at once," and she stopped packing.

She found her mother in search of her father again. She found him in the study.

"What is the matter, father?" she asked.

"Don't ask any questions till you have answered mine. Did aunt or uncle telegraph for you?"

"Yes—I telegraphed to him," said her aunt, defiantly.

"Why did you?"

"Because I thought it best to do so," was the reply.

"Indeed! Well, you can rest assured that I shall tell him all I know of your hopeful, who is at the bottom of all this."

"Why, what in the world is the matter?" exclaimed the governor, as Mrs. Morton burst into tears and left the room.

"I will tell you all, father," and in ten minutes she had told him all she knew of the performances of her cousin, Al Morton, since the burning of the Morton residence.

The governor was dumfounded. He had always held a high opinion of his sister's son. This seemed to shock him.

"Tell me, are you in love with this young fireman?" her father asked.

"I don't know whether it is gratitude or love. I have found him to be a gentleman and a brave man. He is really a boy yet—only about my own age, and has never presumed on his service to me. He has never called here save when I sent for him, once to thank him and once to bring me the silver trumpet I gave him. I am sorry to say it, but aunt has not told you the truth about him."

"Well, pack up your things and we'll leave at four o'clock."

She returned to her room to resume the task of packing her trunks, aided by a maid.

Her aunt came in and shut the door.

"Turning upon her niece, she hissed:

"Dora Pelham, you have ruined my son! A week from now you will wish you had never been born! Your name will be a byword on the streets of Carlton!"

Dora was equal to the emergency.

"You are capable of making it so, aunt," she replied. "I think I shall regret more that you are my father's sister than anything else. You forget that you are actually pushing your son into the penitentiary."

The mother staggered against a bureau for support.

"I think I have influence enough to have the law pushed against him," Dora said further. "As the mother of a convict your position in society would be an enviable one, would it not?"

Her aunt gasped for breath.

Dora had cut her in a vital place.

She was a woman to whom social position was everything, and here she was in danger of social ruin. The personification of selfishness herself, she could not forgive it in others.

Mrs. Morton left the room and returned to her own, sent for the governor, who had gone downstairs to receive visits from the politicians.

He sent word back that he would be up again as soon as possible.

In the meantime Dora paid a visit to Tom after the doctor had dressed the wound on his head.

She found Jack Thorn and Ben Stewart there.

"Oh, I am so glad you boys have come," she said, as she shook hands with each of them. "Tom was here last night, and he was very much hurt. I am so glad you boys have come for my sake, and he ran out and got hurt right before my eyes. Now if I was his wife, I'd give him a good scolding for what I'd do."

"Do you mean to scold him?" Jack asked.

"Indeed. I really think you deserve a good scolding."

"Well, if you promise to scold him, I'll scold you for what you did."

"I'll scold you for what you did."

"I'll scold you for what you did."

"Oh, Lord!" gasped Jack. "Will you marry our Tom?"

"Yes; say nothing, though. My father has come to take me away. I have a fortune in my own right, and I am going to give it and myself to the man who saved my life at the risk of his own," and she turned and laid her hand in Tom's.

"Oh, Dora!" Tom murmured. "This is more than I could ever hope for. I am not dreaming, am I?"

"No, dear. You are wide awake," she replied.

Jack soon came back to report that a minister would soon be there.

Half an hour later the minister came down and many guests rushed forward to ask how the young fireman was.

"I think he is doing very well," he replied.

"Is he near death?"

"No, I think not. On the contrary, he is the happiest man in the state just now. I married him to Miss Pelham a few minutes ago."

That was a bombshell in the big hotel.

The news flew like flashes of lightning, and the minister disappeared. The governor was shocked, but kept perfect control of himself.

CHAPTER XX.

AN UNEXPECTED OCCURRENCE.

When the governor sent in to know if he could see Hazen, he told the messenger to show him up. A few moments later he came in, and she sprang forward, threw her arms about his neck, kissed him and said:

"You won't be angry with me when you learn this?"

"No, dear. If you are satisfied, I am sure I have nothing to say. So you are the young rogue, eh?" and he extended his hand to Tom as he spoke.

He then introduced him to Jack and Ben, and he shook hands with them, saying that Mazeppa No. 2 had the best fire company of any in the state.

The news soon spread through the city that Tom Hazen, the young fireman of Mazeppa No. 2, had been married to the daughter of the governor of the state. Everybodys was praising him for risking his life to save an old beggar woman.

The members of the fire company whooped like so many boys when they heard it.

Al Morton remained in his room at the hotel. He had succeeded in having his appearance at the wedding, and his father was doing all in his power to keep the matter hushed up entirely.

When she heard of the marriage, and would see no one but her husband and the governor.

"There's no use in making any fuss over it," the governor said to her. "If you ruin me politically were I to do so, for the people have votes, you know. She has money, and I'll be a millionaire yet."

The members of the fire company of Mazeppa No. 2, dressed in their uniforms, came to the hotel in a body. They thought the married couple should be back for a ride. They went in and found the young couple in the room where they married, and they were all very happy.

The young couple were in bed with the young couple in the room where they married.

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brothers to us. I am incapable of ingratitude—whatever other faults I may have."

"Boys, she hasn't any faults," Tom said. "She is true blue, and is going to ride with us on our parade."

Clang!

The great fire bell had called the firemen of the city to their post of duty, and every member of Mazeppa went bounding down the stairs of the hotel to join their engine in the street.

In the rush several guests were rudely jostled and one was upset and went rolling on the floor. Even Tom, forgetting himself, sprang out of bed and would have gone with them had not Dora caught and pulled him back.

"I shall have to keep you tied, Tom," she said to him. "I believe you'd rather run to a fire than stay with me."

"I beg your pardon. I have been in the habit of jumping when that bell struck."

"Yes, but you've got to mind another sort of belle now."

"Oh, I'm willing to mind," and he laughed softly as he returned to the bed.

The fire was at the house of Mrs. Raines, in the floor below her. Being a frame building, it burned like a pile of pine shavings, and a half dozen people had to be taken from the windows. Among them was the widow and her daughter—saved twice by the same fire company.

Jack Thorn saved her this time, and Dan Allen got the widow out. Members of the Vigilant company saved three others.

This time Dollie kept her head. She didn't faint at all, and out on the street she asked one of the young firemen where Tom was.

"At the Carlton House with his wife," was the reply.

"With his wife!" she almost shrieked.

"Yes; he and Dora Pelham were married this morning. You knew he was hurt last night, didn't you?"

"Yes," and she seemed to almost turn to stone, so white and rigid did she become.

She and her mother went to the home of a friend near by, and the firemen continued to fight the flames as long as there was a spark to be seen. Then they went on home to their quarters.

The next day Jack went to make inquiries for the widow, and soon found where she was stopping.

"I want to know something about your losses," he said to her. "You know Mazeppa No. 2 say your Dollie belongs to them."

"Our losses are nothing at all," she replied, "for we insured all our furniture as soon as we got it."

"Well, you're a wise woman," Jack remarked.

"I am glad I had sense enough to do that, anyway."

"Yes, so am I; but if you need any help, let us know. Where is Dollie?"

"She is in our room. Do you wish to see her?"

"Yes, if you please."

He waited till the young girl came in, and greeted her with a hearty handshake.

"How about the ride on the parade?" he asked her.

"Oh, I can't do it," she replied.

"Why not?"

"Why, who would look at me with a bride on the next horse?"

Jack laughed heartily.

"Do you want the people to stare at you?" he asked.

"What a question!" and her pretty nose turned up toward the ceiling.

She looked hard at him for a minute or so, and he said: "I mean it, Dollie. I love you, but was afraid to say so, because I thought you liked Tom better."

"Are your wages enough for two?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Can my mother live with us?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll have you."

Jack was beside himself with joy, and he hastened for a minister to perform the ceremony.

CHAPTER XXI.

AL MORTON A MANIAC.

Tom read in the papers the next morning how Jack Thorn had saved Dollie Reins and her mother from a fiery grave.

"It's the second time Mazeppa No. 2 has saved them," he said to Dora, by his bedside.

"They seem to be unfortunate about fires," Dora replied. "I am very sorry for them and must go and see them as soon as I know where they live."

"Some of the boys will be in this evening," said Tom, "and any of them can tell you, I guess."

"It's hard for them to lose everything again. Of course Dollie won't ride in the parade now."

"I don't know. She has a sunny disposition and would be willing to do anything to please the boys."

They were thus talking when a card was handed in on which was written:

"Jack and Dollie."

"Show them up," Dora said.

Jack and Dollie came up, hand in hand.

Dora greeted Dollie with a kiss, and Jack and Tom shook hands like the bosom friends they were.

"Oh, I'm so glad to see you," Dora said to Dollie. "Tom and I were just talking about you and feeling so sorry you had lost everything again."

"We had everything insured," Dollie replied, and the two sat and talked in whispers for some minutes.

"Hello! Dora!" Tom suddenly sang out.

Dora started and asked:

"What is it?"

"Jack and Dollie are married!"

"Oh, say!" and in another moment the two brides were again clasped in each other's arms.

"Well, well," exclaimed Tom, "I am glad of it, old man. You are making good wages and can take care of her."

"Yes, and she's going to ride on the engine horse, too," said Jack.

Ere the happy couple left the hotel Dora had given Dollie a check for one thousand dollars to fit up a home with and promised to be as a sister to her as long as she lived.

The boys at the engine-house, when they heard of Jack's marriage to the beautiful ship girl, they made up their minds to have a grand jubilee, and a committee was appointed to get it up.

"Hold on now, boys," said Bill Saxton. "Our parade and jubilee can all be merged into one. With the two brides riding on engine horses on parade we'll have a jubilee enough. We'll take the town by storm, and the other companies won't be in it with us."

They agreed with him, and at once turned all their energies toward making the parade a jubilee.

Ben Saxton and Dan Allen called on Tom for some instructions two days later at the Carlton House. They found him sitting in a rocking-chair still in the hands of the physician.

"If the ball runs, just keep your seat, Tom," Ben said to

him. "We can attend to the fires. You've won the right to rest."

"That's the best advice that's been given him yet," said Dora.

"I am not going to stir out until the doctor tells me I am all right," Tom replied. "He says I'll be all right in time for the parade."

They went downstairs to leave the hotel and were met in the main office by some young dukes who had been drinking.

"Oh, here's some of those young fire dogs!" sung out one of them, and he whistled at them as if calling a dog.

Dan Allen was mad as a hornet in an instant.

He walked up to the offending young man and dealt him a blow on the nose that laid him flat on his back on the floor. In another instant two of the others pitched into Dan, and then Ben went to his assistance.

In just half a minute four other young firemen got mixed up in it, and a regular rough-and-tumble riot was on hand.

The police came in and made arrests right and left, but Tom and Ben got away, and hurried back to the engine-house without having received but a few scratches.

Tom laughed when he heard of it.

"The boys of Mazeppa No. 2 can take care of themselves every time," he said to Dora. "They are bad boys to have against you, and the best friends in the world when you need friends. They are not afraid of fire nor of men."

"So it seems. Those young men got what they deserved, and I am glad of it."

"Have you seen your Cousin Al since our marriage?" Tom asked of Dora.

"No. The servants say he stays in his room and has his meals sent up to him."

"What has been done about his case?"

"I haven't heard a word about it. I haven't spoken to any of the family since father left."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and do not care to, either."

"I am sorry you and your aunt do not speak."

"Well, I am not. She tried to have me sent away, and I told her I'd never speak to her again as long as I lived and I don't think I will."

Just then the door flew open, and Al Morton stood on the threshold, his eyes blood-shot, hair unkempt, and a revolver in his hand.

Dora screamed and sprang to the side of Tom's rocking-chair to screen him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from Al.

"By George," whispered Tom, "he is off his base—clean gone! Get away, Dora!"

"No, no," she said. "He'll kill you."

"Get away, I tell you!" and he pushed her roughly aside.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the maniac. "It's another fire now with bullets in it. You would be happy and leave me to misery and despair, cousin. He never loved you as I do. Ha, ha, ha! You can have each other in death. I am going to have my revenge. They told me what to do, and now so do I. Ha, ha, ha! You'll both be united in death. Yes, you'll die, both of you!"

Crack!

Tom sprang from his chair and Dora screamed.

The next moment Tom and the maniac were rolling over and over on the floor in a death-struggle, and howling footsteps were heard in the corridor.

Crack!

Plastering fell from the ceiling, and Dora sank to the floor in a death-like swoon.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RUIN OF AL MORTON.

The sound of the pistol shot rang through the big hotel with startling distinctness.

Then a scream and a rush followed.

The scream came from Dora Hazen.

When Tom sprang forward and grappled with Al Morton she never moved or uttered a word. She stood like one dazed, gazing at them in a death struggle on the floor.

Suddenly she saw Al press the muzzle of a revolver against Tom's side. Then she screamed, darted forward, and seized the weapon, wrenching it from his hand.

It was at that moment that help came.

Tom had the upper hand of him, but he was still struggling fiercely and yelling:

"I'll kill him! I'll kill 'em both!"

The guests separated them.

Tom went back to look for Dora, but the wild shrieks that came from Al Morton told that he had lost his reason and had suddenly become insane.

He found her standing near the mantel with the revolver still in her hand.

She did not seem to be aware that she still had it.

"Dora, you saved my life," he said.

"Yes, Tom, and now you are mine more than ever," and that was the idea uppermost in her mind in the moment of greatest peril.

They remained in their apartment till friends came to inquire if either had been hurt, and then were told that Al was gone mentally, and his mother almost in a state of collapse.

"I am sorry for them," Tom said to the physician, who told him the news. "I am not hurt in the least, but it was a close call. One bullet went into the wall there, and another brought down a lot of plastering from the ceiling overhead," and he pointed to the places as he spoke.

When the news reached the engine house of Mazeppa No. 2 the boys were greatly excited. They seemed to think that Al Morton's insanity was feigned for the purpose, and at last decided to send Jack Thorn and Bill Saxton to see Tom about it.

Tom and Dora were seated in their little parlor with a couple of ladies who had called when Jack, Dollie, and Bill were away.

The two ladies ran into each other's arms and hugged and kissed in a natural sympathy.

"How glad you are alive yet, old man," Jack remarked, as he came forward with Tom.

"Yes, I am pretty hard to kill, I guess," said Tom, as Bill and Jack took seats. "But he'd have finished me but for Dora," and he explained to them how she had seized and wrenched the pistol from Al Morton's hand just in time to save him.

The young firemen had a pleasant visit, and then took leave of Tom and Dora. Jack and his wife went home and Bill Saxton hurried back to the engine house to tell the boys what Tom had said.

He had hardly finished telling his story when the fire-bell rang.

Instantly every member was at his post, and in ten seconds the engine was dashed out of the engine house, and sped off down the street with a roar.

They went past the Carlton House, and saw Tom and Dora standing there. A wild cheer went up from each boy fireman, and then they were out of sight down the street.

It was a big fire, and two lives were lost. The firemen of the three companies worked like heroes, and saved several. But no daring deeds were done save by Dan Allen, who came near losing his life in trying to get an old man out of the burning building. He succeeded, however, and the firemen and spectators cheered him as he came down to the ground.

The next morning, when Tom read the account of the fire in the papers, he said to Dora that he was sorry he was not there with the boys.

"Well, I am glad you were not," she replied. "You are not strong enough yet for such hard work," and she sat down by him and told him of many things she wished him to do now that he was her husband.

The next day his physician told him he could go out, and would run no risk whatever, so far as his hurt was concerned.

"Then I am going to see the boys to-night," he said to Dora.

"But you must not run to any fires," she quickly interposed.

"Well, I won't if no fire breaks out," he returned smilingly.

He went to the company's hall, and the boys received him with a hurrah, crowding about him to shake his hand.

"You have everything in shape for the parade, I see," he remarked to Saxton.

"Yes, and you ought to see the wreaths we have for the two brides who are to ride in front of the engine," Saxton replied. "We are going to take the prize all along the line, and don't you forget it."

Clang—clang—clang!

The great fire-bell once more called them to duty, and Tom Hazen was one of the first to bound downstairs, don his fireman's hat, seize his trumpet, and dash out with the engine for the scene of conflagration.

The fire was in a tenement house down in the lower end of the city. The building was of frame, four stories high, and burned like tinder. It was crowded with poor families, some of whom had retired to rest after a daily struggle for bread.

Mazeppa No. 2 was the second company to reach the fire, the Vigilant being much nearer to it than the others.

But the difference was only a few brief moments, and in an incredibly short space of time two streams were pouring upon the burning building.

"Up with the ladders!" cried Tom, and the boys, cheered by the sound of his voice, rushed the ladders up to a third story window where two women were screaming for help.

Tom sprang forward and went up the ladder with the agility of a squirrel.

"Come out on the ladder!" he called to both of the women, and one came out to him.

The other one was in the act of climbing out when a loud explosion in the room behind her sent her headlong down upon Tom and the other who had preceded her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

The woman uttered a wild shriek and fell heavily on the one Tom was assisting down the ladder. The other screamed, and then all three went tumbling earthward together.

A cry of horror went up from both the men and the women, for all seemed to be looking upon the death of all three at one blow.

But with a pertinacity that never once deserted him, Tom rose up, armed with women as he was, and turned toward the

ladder; he tried to break the force of their fall by catching on to the rungs with his legs.

Suddenly, when some six feet above ground, both his legs went between the rungs.

Instantly he crooked them, and thus hung suspended head downward, still holding on to the two women.

The dress of one tore loose, and she fell to the ground. But the force of her fall was so broken she was not hurt.

The other one he held to and she hung just a few feet above the ground. Two firemen quickly rescued her, and then Tom followed, completely exhausted by the tremendous strain to which he had been subjected.

But the wild cheering that went up from every eye-witness of his gallant act was heard half-way across the city.

The news of his narrow escape from death by a fall from the ladder flew like wildfire, and soon reached the Carlton House.

Dora heard of it, of course, for there are always people who make it a business to do things they ought not to do, and she immediately called a carriage.

By the time it was ready she had asked a gentleman to go with her.

They were driven rapidly toward the scene of conflagration.

When they came in sight of the burning buildings which had now become a great bed of coals on which the firemen were still pouring streams of water, it was all her escort could do to keep her from rushing right into the very hottest place to ask for Tom.

"Tom has been sent home," Bill Saxton said.

Dora sprang forward and asked:

"Is he hurt?"

"No, but he had a narrow escape, and the chief sent him home."

"He would not have been sent away unless he was hurt," she replied, turning to her escort. "Take me home, please," and she looked faint and weak.

Just then Jack Thorn saw her, and ran up to ask if she had seen Tom.

"No. I came after him."

"The rogue is all right. The chief sent him home because two lives are enough for one man to save. Lord, but you should have seen him. I thought he was a goner at one time, but don't think he is hurt the least bit."

That was enough.

His cheerful manner and jolly way of expressing himself satisfied her that Tom was not much hurt, if hurt at all.

"Come, we'll go home," she said, and they turned away from the scene of the fire and hurried up the street.

When they reached the hotel Dora found Tom very uneasy about her.

She ran to him, threw her arms about his neck, and burst into tears.

"Oh, I thought you were hurt!" she sobbed.

"Well, you see how groundless your fears were, do you not?" he said.

Though he said he was not hurt, Tom felt sore in every part of his body. He had been the very strain to which he had ever been subjected, and he felt like going out that day.

The press praised his gallant deed in glowing terms, and Dora was prouder than ever of her choice.

One of the Mortons came to her side, and they were all very happy.

At last the fire was out, and the city was saved.

The firemen were all very brave, and they were all very well.

The fire was out, and the city was saved.

Every member was in a new uniform, and felt sure of taking the prize as they marched through the streets of the city.

When they passed out of the engine house the engine was a marvel of beauty. It was covered with huge bridal wreaths. So were the horses, and on the big black horse on the right sat Dora, clad in bridal robes. On the other sat Dollie, similarly dressed. They were both beauties, and the happiness that shone in their faces rendered them more beautiful still.

It was a sight never to be forgotten, for ever since the world began a bride has always been interesting to men and women.

As Mazeppa No. 2 moved along the line, women waved handkerchiefs and fans, and men hats and canes, while shouting themselves hoarse.

The fact that the bride on the right was the daughter of the Governor of the State, rendered her all the more interesting.

Tom and Jack, the two happy husbands of the brides, marched on foot in front of the engine. Both had performed marvelous deeds, and their fame was known to all the vast multitude who cheered the procession.

As they passed the Carlton House, Dora looked up and saw her father and mother on the balcony. They had just arrived.

The surprise was mutual.

They did not know that she was going to ride in the parade, and she did not dream of their presence in the city.

All Dora could do was to throw kisses at them as she rode slowly by. The parents were so proud of her beauty and devotion that they did not hesitate to wave hands and handkerchiefs at her.

As the parade moved along, Dora heard many expressions that caused her to look in the direction they came from.

When the parade was over she hastened in a carriage to join her parents at the hotel. Tom was with her.

"Here's my Tom, mother!" she exclaimed, as she and Tom entered the room where they were.

The mother greeted Tom with a motherly embrace, and called him her son. That completed the happiness of both.

After the parade Tom resigned his place as foreman of Mazeppa No. 2, and Jack Thorn was promoted to succeed him.

Al Morton was sent to an asylum, where he remained for two years, and was then pronounced cured. His mother then took him to Europe.

The Bryans soon left the city to avoid the consequences of their attempt to ruin the good name of Tom Hazen. They had failed in their efforts, and thought it safer to leave Carlton forever.

Tom and Dora moved to the home of the governor, and a year later a child was born to them—a boy.

Tom, who had been in the city of Carlton for many years, and who had represented the district in Congress. But he never forgot the boy firemen of Carlton, for he paid them a visit once a year, and had them to dine with him at the Carlton, where they ate and sang songs, and talked of old times and their plucky work on Ladder and Line.

THE END.

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